

“How do I deal with this trans kid?”

**Subject teacher students’ perspectives on LGBTQ+ themes and heteronormativity in
subject teacher training at the University of Oulu**

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Abstract

This qualitative research analyses, through the concept of heteronormativity, the support that is given in dealing with LGBTQ+ themes in subject teacher training (*aineenopettajakoulutus*) at University of Oulu from the perspective of subject teacher students. This study examines the subject teacher students' perspective to LGBTQ+ themes and students, their description on received support from the subject teacher training programme in dealing with LGBTQ+ themes and students, and perceived heteronormative practices in teacherhood and subject teacher training at University of Oulu. The data consist of written data from two sets that were gathered in November 2020 and mid-February of 2021 respectively: a qualitative survey (n= 36) with open questions and data from two interviews.

As a theoretical framework, this study uses queer theory, and more specifically, Judith Butler's view on gender as a socially constructed performative act. This view is used as an indicator for LGBTQ+ positive thinking to support the theorised open-mindedness of teacher students in Finland. In terms of heteronormativity in Finnish teacher education, this study draws on the research of the *TASUKO* programme and Jukka Lehtonen's extensive research on heteronormativity in Finnish teacher training and sets out to investigate whether the notion of invisible and often unquestionable heteronormative praxis in Finnish teacher training is perceived to be present at University of Oulu from the point of view of subject teacher students. The data was analysed by using theory-based content analysis, where predetermined theory was contrasted to the gathered data to understand the subject teacher students' perceptions of gender and sexual minorities, if they have received support from teacher education in term of dealing with LGBTQ+ themes and students, and if and how heteronormative praxis is manifested in subject teacher training at University of Oulu according to subject teacher students.

The data indicates subject teacher students that participated in this study at University of Oulu mostly display a positive and supportive attitude towards LGBTQ+ themes and community members as previous research theorise. Majority of the subject teacher students that took part in this study mostly defined gender as a socially constructed, where individual's self-determination is in key role. However, in some cases gender was given a hybrid definition that partially relies on biology, where gender is seen as a biological fact, indicating that heteronormative view on gender among Finnish teacher students has not entirely vanished. The results also indicate that the teacher students' perception is that the subject teacher training at the University of Oulu has some LGBTQ+ elements included in it, but they mostly stay marginalised or are treated with minimum attention. Therefore, the participants of this study described that receiving support during teacher training in handling LGBTQ+ themes and students was miniscule, although signs of active partaking on the programme's side is visible. It seems that despite extensive legislation and state-led gender inclusivity programme in teacher training (*TASUKO*), LGBTQ+ themes have stayed in the margins of subject teacher education at the University of Oulu according to the students, aligning this study to previous research.

Tiivistelmä

Tämä kvalitatiivinen tutkimus analysoi heteronormatiivisuutta ja saatua tukea LGBTQ+ yhteisöön kuuluvien teemojen ja oppilaiden kohtaamisesta sekä heteronormatiivisuudesta Oulun yliopiston aineenopettajakoulutuksessa. Tässä tutkimuksessa tutkittiin aineenopettajaopiskelijoiden suhtautumista sukupuoli- ja seksuaalivähemmistöteemoihin sekä LGBTQ+ oppilaisiin, aineenopettajaopiskelijoiden kuvaamaan saatuun tuen määrään näiden asioiden käsittelyssä aineenopettajakoulutuksen aikana sekä aineenopettajaopiskelijoiden kykyä hahmottaa heteronormatiivisia käytäntöjä opettajuudessa sekä aineenopettajakoulutuksessa. Analysoitava data koostui kvalitatiivisen kyselyn kirjallisista tuloksista (n= 36) sekä kahdesta haastattelusta. Kysely pidettiin marraskuussa 2020 ja haastattelut helmikuun 2021 aikana.

Teoreettisina viitekehyksinä tässä tutkimuksessa on käytetty queer-tutkimusta, tarkemmin sanottuna Judith Butlerin näkemystä sukupuolesta performatiivisena ja sosiaalisesti rakennettuna kokonaisuutena. Edelliset tutkimukset osoittavat suomalaisten opettajaopiskelijoiden olevan varsin avoimia vähemmistöjä kohtaan. Aineenopettajaopiskelijan kykyä hahmottaa sukupuoli Butlerin antamien raamien mukaan toimi näin ollen mittarina positiiviselle ajattelulle seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistöihin liittyviä teemoja ja oppilaita kohtaan. Heteronormatiivisuutta on suomalaisessa opettajankoulutuksessa tutkittu verrattain vähän, mutta tulokset osoittavat opettajankoulutuksen olevan edelleen heteronormatiivista, jokseenkin hiljaisesti vähemmistöt hyväksyvää. Jukka Lehtosen tutkimuksia ja *TASUKO*-hankkeen tuloksia on käytetty tässä tutkimuksessa luomaan teoria, jonka mukaan aineenopettajakoulutus Oulun yliopistossa edelleen pitkälti heteronormatiivinen. Kerätty data analysoitiin teorialähtöisen sisältöanalyysin keinoin, jolloin edellisistä tutkimustuloksista luotiin teoria Oulun yliopiston aineenopettajakoulutuksen heteronormatiivisuudesta. Teoreettisten viitekehysten avulla analysoitiin aineenopettajaopiskelijoiden suhtautumista sukupuoli- ja seksuaalivähemmistöihin, aineenopettajaopiskelijoiden saamaa tukea kyseisten teemojen ja oppilaiden kohtaamiseen sekä heteronormatiivisten käytänteiden esiintuomiseen omassa opettajuudessa sekä Oulun yliopiston aineenopettajakoulutuksessa.

Tulokset osoittavat tähän tutkimukseen osallistuneiden tulevien aineenopettajien olevan suurimmalta osin avoimia sekä seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistöjä tukevia. Moni määritteli sukupuolen Butlerin näkemyksen mukaan, mutta huomattava osuus antoi hybridivastauksen, jossa on viitteitä biologiaan ja heteronormatiiviseen ajatteluun sukupuolesta. Tulokset osoittavat seksuaali- ja sukupuoli teemojen olevan hyvin marginaalinen osa aineenopettajakoulutusta Oulun yliopistossa, joka kertoo vallalla olevasta hiljaisesta heteronormatiivisuudesta, joka hyväksyy vähemmistöt mutta ei aktiivisesti ota kantaa näihin. Suurin osa tutkimukseen osallistuneista kuitenkin tuns asian tärkeäksi ja olisi halunnut saada lisää koulutusta aiheeseen liittyen. Tämä kertoo, ettei seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistötietoinen koulutus ole saanut merkittävää jalansijaa Oulun yliopiston aineenopettajakoulutuksessa, vaikka sitä on toivottu.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 2010s has seen a significant rise on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and other non-heterosexualities and gender (referred as *LGBTQ+*) related themes in societies and medias: all around us, popular culture pushes the boundaries of sexuality and gender through television and streaming services, making the marginalised in our society more visible for the masses.

Though progress is evident, it seems the more visibility *LGBTQ+* community gains, the more polarised the problems and obstacles the community faces have become. 2019 saw a surge in hate crimes against *LGBTQ+* people in the US (*Human Rights Campaign, 2020*) and similar state-run oppression can be seen manifesting in Europe, particularly in former eastern bloc countries such as Poland, Russia and latest in Hungary, where educating minors about *LGBTQ+* matters is to become illegal later in 2021 (*BBC, 2021*). Societal safe havens, such as Finland, appear evermore *LGBTQ+* friendly but such prime example of equality also has its flaws.

In 2017, Finland became the 12th European state to legalise same-sex marriage. A few years earlier in 2014, the equality law was updated to protect sexual and gender minorities from discrimination (*Finlex, 2014*). The same law also bounds workplaces, institutions, and schools to actively promote equality by demanding each of these to annually provide an equality plan, where the current state is examined, and plans are set for improvement. On the legislative side, it appears that the rights of *LGBTQ+* people, including minors, are secured in Finland and therefore, life is equal to all Finnish citizens. However, in its annual report the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare *THL* (*Terveyden- ja hyvinvoinninlaitos*) examined the wellbeing of students, aged 14 to 17, belonging to sexual and gender minorities and reported that they were in all accounts less content with the quality of their lives and more vulnerable to discrimination in schools than their straight and cisgender counterparts (*THL, 2020*). Most *LGBTQ+* youth felt the lack of open discussion in schools and the incapability of teachers and staff to intervene as key factors for improvement. Therefore, it can be assumed that despite the updated equality law and demand for equality plans in schools have not had a desired outcome. This also highlights the vulnerability of *LGBTQ+* youth in schools.

I argue that one of the things that prevents teachers from intervening and upholds the passive attitude towards LGBTQ+ matters can be effectively summarised as follows: Finnish universities and other institutions that train teachers fail to provide adequate training, guidance, and support to deal with LGBTQ+ students and themes. Therefore, Finnish teacher training programmes produce teachers that feel like they are unable to combat the unequal treatment of LGBTQ+ minorities in school. The institutions and universities in Finland that provide teacher training have not been able to correspond adequately enough to the rising numbers of LGBTQ+ youth that openly express their identities? in schools. While the rest of the Finnish society becomes more open, Finnish schools drag behind (*Lehtonen, 2012ab; Syrjäläinen & Kujala, 2010*). There is significant evidence of the fact that Finnish schools, despite the law, still operate in a heteronormative manner (*Suortamo et al, 2010*), and a major issue in this is the inability of teachers to deal with LGBTQ+ themes. The root of this problem is in the Finnish teacher training itself: there is not enough education about LGBTQ+ themes nor how to these themes manifest in everyday school life. Currently, University of Lapland is the only university in Finland that has a compulsory gender studies course implemented into teacher training according to a news article by Finnish Broadcasting Company (*YLE, 2021*).

From previous research, I theorise that LGBTQ+ themes in subject teacher training and education are still marginalised at the University of Oulu due to the prevalence of heteronormativity (see *Butler, 1991*) even with the launching of programmes such as *TASUKO*. Based on previous research conducted on Finnish teacher education, this study sets out to investigate whether invisible yet present heteronormativity that is the result of passivity and lack of appropriate training in LGBTQ+ matters prevails in Finnish teacher education. This qualitative research argues that the subject teacher training programme at University of Oulu does not have enough LGBTQ+ themes incorporated in it, and there is an evident need for it. Therefore, I argue that unquestioned heteronormativity is one of the driving forces in subject teacher training at the University of Oulu that keeps LGBTQ+ themes marginalised. For the collecting of the data, I conducted a qualitative survey to examine how aware the subject teacher trainees at University of Oulu were of LGBTQ+ matters, how would they react if LGBTQ+ themes or students would appear in their teaching, have they received any education or training regarding LGBTQ+ themes and how would they improve the current subject teacher training programme at University of Oulu. My overall aim is to expose the hidden heteronormative agenda of the subject teacher training at the University of Oulu's subject teacher training. I contrast my

findings to my theory that is formed from previous research made of Finnish school system's assumed heteronormativity and teacher training's passivity to change (*Lehtonen 2003; 2010, 2014: Syrjäläinen & Kujala 2010 et al.*). To triangulate and increase the reliability of this study, I also conducted two interviews to further examine the teacher trainee's attitudes towards LGBTQ+ themes in teacher training. The interviews were designed and based on the preliminary observations made of the responses to the questionnaire. To analyse the data collected, I used theory-based content analysis as a methodological tool to interpret the data and thus, support my theory of the minimal amount of LGBTQ+ themes in subject teacher training at University of Oulu and exposing the prevalence of heteronormativity in subject teacher training.

2. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH MATERIAL

In this section I will present in detail the tools, data collection, and broader ideas behind the collection. I first begin by explaining how I conducted my qualitative survey and what were its main themes. I then proceed to explain how I conducted the two interviews that I based on themes that rose from the survey data and required elaboration. Both the questions, interviews, and the data from both will be presented and discussed in detail in section 4 of thesis. The full outline of the survey (appendices A) and interview (appendices B) questions are retrievable in appendices section. In the last section of this section, I briefly discuss the ethics and reliability of my thesis.

2.1 QUALITATIVE SURVEY

For the purpose of this study, I first began working on themes I would like to gather data for. These same questions would also be applied to my analytic framework for my theory based qualitative method for data interpretation. For the finalised version, three main themes were chosen as the frame to base the questions on: (1) *Self-reflection about one's sexual and gender identity and the recipients' knowledge of LGBTQIA+ related matters in general*, (2) *Teacher education at the University of Oulu and LGBTQIA+ themes in subject teacher training at University of Oulu* and (3) *Teaching and LGBTQIA+ related matters: recipients' teaching and employing LGBTQIA+ themes in one's teaching*. All of these themes and questions will be discussed in detail in the subsection 3.4 and section 4.

The purpose of theme 1 is to chart whether the recipients were aware of the societal shift in Finland, where gender and sexual minorities are becoming more visible to the masses. My purpose was to examine to a what extent the recipients are familiar with the term *LGBTQ+* and how and in what kind of situations they have been in contact with the term. Theme 2's aim was to gather knowledge of the provided support by teacher trainers, lecturers and, overall, the teacher training program regarding *LGBTQ+* themes and students at University of Oulu. My intention was to chart if the recipients had encountered *LGBTQ+* themes directly or indirectly during their teacher training and where and how these instances had happened. The third theme's aim was to gather data on the recipients' own attitudes towards *LGBTQ+* themes being taught in their own lessons by asking the recipients to provide examples about situations they might encounter *LGBTQ+* themes or students and inquiring how they would initially respond to such a situation. Overall, the aim of these themes was to form a frame that would provide insights of the

current state of heteronormativity and potential absence of LGBTQ+ themes in subject teacher training at the University of Oulu.

In the finalised version, I formed a qualitative survey consisting of twelve questions of which ten were actual questions regarding LGBTQ+ themes in subject teacher training and the rest two for contacting the recipients later for interviews should they choose to volunteer. Each of these questions and the data provided by the recipients will be discussed in detail later in section 4 of this thesis. My first platform for the distribution of this survey was Google Forms but I quickly realised I had a choice to make: to keep the survey fully anonymous, I would have to keep it public, which in turn would increase the risk of the actual survey data being corrupted by recipients outside the intended audience. The other option would have been to keep it closed by sending each recipient a personalised link, but by doing so I would have had to collect personal e-mail addresses of each of the recipients and risk the anonymity of the data. Instead of Google Forms, I decided to conduct my survey on Webropol, a Finnish based survey platform, that proved to be the most secure without risking the anonymity of the recipients and therefore, increasing the reliability of my data. Thus, the data collection is carried out in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the ethical guidelines of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK) for research in the humanities and social and behavioural sciences.

I distributed my qualitative survey through a mailing list, and by doing so I did not have the need to gather personal e-mail addresses, thus, securing anonymity. The mailing list consists of students that are part of the subject teacher training programme of a particular academic year at the University of Oulu. In order to send e-mails through the list, the sender must be approved first by the list's administrators; in this case, all subject teacher trainees at the University of Oulu are gathered under a single e-mailing list that is supervised by the Faculty of Education, which approved my temporary participation on the list. In total, I sent four e-mails, first the actual invitation on the first of November 2020, where I explained who I was, what was the purpose of my thesis and how would the data provided be processed in a secure manner. The three others were kind reminders that were initially the same e-mail as the first sent. The survey was open fourteen consecutive days and on 14th of November 2020, I closed the survey as it seemed I would not receive more answers. 36 recipients in total answered the survey and their answers provide the majority of the data of this study. I chose this specific time (late 2020) since most subject teacher trainees at the University of Oulu are on their final weeks of the

training programme and this would provide me the newest data possible. From this data, I later conducted a frame for questions that would function as the basis of my interview questions that were held in February 2021.

2.2 INTERVIEWS

From those 36 recipients, six volunteered to be interviewed. After closing the survey in mid-December of 2020, I started going through the data, question by question, to see what themes would start manifesting from it. My initial results for theme 1 were that teacher students at University of Oulu were clearly aware of the abbreviation *LGBTQ+*, as many stated that they had encountered in increasing numbers in the past couple of years. All of the 36 recipients were aware of the recent improvements regarding to LGBTQ+ people's rights in Finland by mentioning, i.e., Marriage Equality law that was set in force in 2017. Most frequently mentioned source for LGBTQ+ related matters was social media in its various forms. Thus, I decided that my first interview question would revolve around the absence of LGBTQ+ related themes in Finnish schools and higher education: why are LGBTQ+ related matters absent and what could be the reason behind it? Questions regarding theme two revealed that 16 (44,5 percent) of the recipients have encountered LGBTQ+ related themes in teacher education at the university of Oulu. To contrast, more than half (55,5 percent) had not. Most common answer was that LGBTQ+ themes were incorporated to lectures and discussions dealing with equality among boys and girls or bullying, yet none of the recipients could actually detail an instance where LGBTQ+ themes were, directly or indirectly, discussed. Therefore, my interview questions regarding theme 2 would focus on the why LGBTQ+ themes get reduced to a mere side note when there is an actual need for a larger amount discussion and how could this be countered. Questions for theme 3 revealed that more than two thirds felt important to incorporate LGBTQ+ themes into their teaching. The recipients were asked to provide examples of situations where different themes regarding sexual or gender minorities could appear in classrooms or teaching, many mentioned bullying and sex education as the two most prominent instances. However, from the perspective of equal rights and treatment of individuals, alarmingly many did not feel the need to discuss about LGBTQ+ themes in school regardless of their occurrences in classroom discussion. Also noteworthy is the number of recipients who stated that they simply lacked the skills to correctly

address LGBTQ+ themes in schools and would like to have some form of instructions from teacher training or schools. Therefore, I concluded that my interview questions regarding theme three would try to establish in what ways should the subject teacher training provide education on LGBTQ+ matters and how could the said themes be integrated in everyday school life.

The finalised list of questions for the interview had six questions. In January of 2021, I contacted two of the six volunteers to proceed with the interviews. The selected two both belong to LGBTQ+ community. I reasoned they would have most insight regarding LGBTQ+ themes and higher education at the University of Oulu. After getting affirmative responses from both, I sent individual e-mails explaining again who I am and what was my thesis going to be about. In the e-mails, I had attached consent forms, which I requested to be e-mailed back to me before the interviews, and the list of questions so the interviewees would have time to prepare their answers properly. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unfortunately not able to meet in person with my interviewees as the university, cafés and public meeting hubs were all closed at the time. Therefore, the interviews were held through Zoom, an internet service that provides real time conference calls that can be easily hosted and recorded. Zoom is also widely used by the University of Oulu, as almost all lectures are held via Zoom due to corona restrictions, and therefore, the platform should be familiar to the interviewees as well. At the beginning of each interview, I once again went through the general framework of my thesis, emphasised that the interviewees anonymity is secured and that at any given point they have the right to withdraw from the interview and that the whole process would be, naturally, recorded. From the interviews, I gathered a total of 27 minutes of data (14 minutes from the first interview and 13 from the latter). The interviews were held in Finnish. For the purposes of this study, I transcribed and translated the parts that were most relevant for my research.

2.3 ETHICS AND RELIABILITY

In 2019, the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (*TENK*) published general guidelines for ethical research for all the research fields using human participants in their studies. The principles guide the researcher towards an ethical approach to one's study that aims to protect the participants integrity. The guidelines state that it is the researcher's responsibility to guarantee that no harm is caused to the participants

through the process. TENK's guidelines can be summarised to five main principles that ensure the participants rights and dignity are respected according to law (2019, pp. 7-9):

1. The participation must be based on willingness. The participant(s) must be given a sufficient amount of time to consider their participation.
2. The participant(s) has the right to withdraw from the study at any given point without the fear of any negative outcomes. The researcher has the right use the so-far collected data according to ethical principles.
3. The participant(s) must be given a sufficient amount of information about the conduction of the study, the contents of the study, and the processing and storing of personal information.
4. The participant(s) must be informed about the possible negative outcomes of the participation.
5. The participant(s) must be informed about the interests of the researcher.

As the participation to my survey and interview was fully based on one's own accord, the ethical criterion 1 is fully met. The survey was open for 14 consecutive days, which I deemed a sufficient amount of time for the participants to decide whether they want to be a part of the study or not. As for the interviews, I gave the interviewees the opportunity to decide when to have the interviews. In my e-mails, in the survey itself and at the beginning of each interview I stated who I was, what was the purpose of my thesis and that the participants had the right to withdraw at any given point, should they choose so. I also explained that the data from both would be stored on my personal laptop with additional copies on a private memory stick. The interviewees also filled and signed a consent form that states all the necessary information regarding their rights and the ethical side of my study. A copy of a signed consent form was given to the interviewees, as I retained the original one. Due to the anonymity of this data, the negative outcomes towards the participants of this data set are reduced to minimum, even though the data deal with highly private matters such as sexuality and gender, since these signifiers cannot be traced to any individual. As this thesis' primary focus is on higher education, as a researcher I must also consider my status from an institutional perspective as there is a chance for an underlining power structure (Brooks *et al.*, 2014). As I consider myself as a peer to those who participated to my study, I hold no power over them which would

compel the participants to take part to this study. As this is purely an independently carried study and not affiliated with corporates nor governmental agendas, I deem that criterion five is also met.

On web-based questionnaires, the anonymity of the participants and the security of the stored data are two most ethical principles (*Fox et al., 2003*). In 2019, a Finnish internet security expert F-Secure tested the vulnerabilities of Webropol's questionnaire services and found initial room for improvement. After the improvements were made, Webropol received praise for its high security methods (*Webropol, 2020*), thus increasing the security of the data. Similar ethical issues rise when conducting online interviews (*James & Bushner, 2009*), as the risk of compromising confidentiality increases when using an internet-based software. I chose Zoom over to personal face-to-face meetings as they were not possible at the time due to COVID-19 restrictions in Finland and its highly used by staff at the University of Oulu. I used heightened security measures (*Aiken, 2020*), such as personal meeting ID that prevents outsiders entering my Zoom room, *waiting room* feature which gives me full control of the participants to my Zoom meeting and only sharing the link to my personal meeting room with the two interviewees. To summarise, heightened security measures, the researcher's openness and choosing appropriate platforms for the survey and interviews guarantee the anonymity of the respondents, thus making this research as ethical as possible.

Evaluating the currency of used literary resources is one way to increase reliability (*Kananen, 2019*). Much of the research concerning LGBTQ+ themes in education in Finland rests on the shoulders of Jukka Lehtonen, professor of sociology at University of Helsinki. For over two decades he has extensively researched LGBTQ+ matters in work life and education alike, both in international and domestical settings. Unfortunately, research on subject teacher training is scarce and the lack LGBTQ+ matters in higher education and teacher training contexts are issues even Lehtonen acknowledges (*Lehtonen et al, 2011*). His work, which will function as the basis of my theoretical framework, will be further examined in section 3 of this thesis. However, I argue that the lack of research proves exactly my argument that more needs to be done by University of Oulu and Finnish higher education institutions in general regarding LGBTQ+ themes in subject teacher training.

When it comes to reliability and interviewing, the researcher has tools to increase the chance of more reliable answers. One of these tools is to make the interview situation

itself more comfortable by forming a bond of trust between the researcher and interviewees (Hyvärinen, 2017 p.37). This was done by starting the interviews with casual small talk where I also explained my own background and why I specifically chose to research LGBTQ+ themes in subject teacher training. As I belong to a sexual minority and have myself received subject teacher training at the University of Oulu, it can be argued that the interviewees and I form an inner circle. This marks the interviews as *inner circle interviews*, as these factors bind me and my interviews to a group that is different from the majority. Juvonen (in Hyvärinen et al, 2017) states that as a member of the inner circle, the researcher can pick valid candidates that are more likely to provide reliable data, as they share similar experiences related to the data. Juvonen also points out that as member of the same inner circle, the researcher and interviewees share an interest, which helps the researcher to engage more actively to the conversation, thus encouraging the interviewee towards more reliable answers (p. 347). It is also crucial for the researcher to remain as objective as possible, since inner circle interviews are at higher risk producing partial data compared to other forms of interviewing.

Even though the literal sources are scarce, the gathered data itself should be sufficient and reliable enough to argue that the participants feel that there indeed is a lack of LGBTQ+ theme in subject teacher training at University of Oulu. This will be discussed in detail in subsection 3.1.1. As this is a qualitative research, I used triangulation to increase the reliability of my thesis. Flick (2018) effectively summarised triangulation as a process, where researchers use multiple perspectives, theories or data sets that are linked to one another for a better understanding of the researched subject (p. 532). I collected different data sets to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon, a common method in qualitative research to increase the reliability of it. As I used literary sources, data from my qualitative survey and data from my interviews, this thesis uses method triangulation where more comprehensive understanding of the researched phenomenon is acquired by usage of multiple data sources on the same subject (Carter et al, 2014). To summarise, the ethical approach guided by TENK, and the careful selection of multiple data sources validate this thesis.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

In this section, I present the concept of heteronormativity and how it has been researched in Finnish schools and higher education contexts. I first begin by looking at how research on sex and gender has been conducted, and the conceptualising of heteronormativity from early feminist critique to more contemporary queer studies. I then proceed to examine how heteronormativity has been researched in Finnish school and higher education contexts, mainly relying on Lehtonen's extensive research. Based on this previous research, I apply a theory of heteronormativity in Finnish subject teacher training which I then contrast to the data findings of my qualitative survey and interviews, discussed in detail in section 4. In the last part of this section, I briefly present content analysis as methodological tool for interpreting my data.

3.1 Research on sex on gender; from biology to queer theory

Sexuality and gender are intertwining in many ways (*Lehtonen, 2003*). Lehtonen understands both concepts as layered social, historical, and cultural constructs, rather than natural and unquestionable biological truths where there are only two assigned sexes (male and female/ masculine and feminine) and one's gender identity is solely based on the fact whether they were born as a man or a woman. In this sense, Lehtonen points out that heterosexuality and reproduction are seen as the norm (*2003, p. 23*). This discourse of heterosexuality as a norm is still visible in societies and it stems from biologic-medicinal approach to sex and gender, where reproduction, continuation of species and heterosexual desires act as the desirable, natural outcomes of fixed male and female genders (*p.24*). These fixed genders then have bodily features, such as genitals, attributed to them to enforce the natural dichotomy. In biology, heterosexuality is seen as a natural, inner attribute of humans which dichotomises humans into male and female genders on chromosome level, which results to masculine men and feminine women being born. These fixed genders are opposing and complementary to one another in the sense of reproduction and this renders other manifestations of sexual desires, such as homosexuality, obscure and unnatural. Medicine shares the same point of view to sexuality and gender but rises heterosexuality as healthy and normal behaviour and other sexualities are categorised as mental health issues (*p. 24*). However, it is worth noting that for example since 2011 transgenderism, a sexual identity that is both contradictive in biology and medicine, is no longer categorised as a mental health disorder (*SETA ry,*

Sateenkaarihistoria Suomessa). As Lehtonen (2003) states in his dissertation, definitions of sexuality and gender have and will change through time and they never meet the requirements for a conclusive definition (pp. 24-25), proving that these definitions cannot be taken as fixated truths but are rather constructs that are discussed and built differently to appropriately fit the desired contexts.

This ideology presented by Lehtonen (2003) originates from 70's feminist critique that aimed to dismantle the oppressive regime of patriarchy by arguing that gender can be defined as biological gender and social gender (p. 25). It argues that one's gender identity is first based on given biological gender (male or female) that through social interactions, norms and expected behaviour forms the masculine or feminine social genders. This view was then challenged by Judith Butler in the 90's as she critiqued feminism for accepting the dichotomy of genders to masculine, powerful men versus feminine, weaker women. In *Gender Trouble and the Subversion of Identity* (1991), Butler problematises the feminist view of *woman* as a subject whose sole existence is based on the contrast of man. This *otherness* is not a stable construct as all genders, including men, are mimicked, and constructed through performance rather than based on given biological or social attributes. Butler also criticised feminism for completely disregarding those identities that do not fit in the tight mould of masculine men and feminine women.

Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble and the Subversion of Identity* (1991) revolutionised studies about gender and sex, and her work can be credited as the basis of queer theory. As an interdisciplinary study, queer theory aims to question what is considered to be *normal* in terms of gender and identity and what constitutes these supposedly deviant identity categories, such as gay, lesbian, bi, trans and queer. Contradictory to the view where biological factors determine one's gender, queer theory takes a social constructionist approach to gender, where the normality of heterosexuality is questioned (Bedford, 2009, p. 20). By exposing the oppressive heteronormative categorisation of sexual and gender identities in societies, queer theory promotes a more fluid and wider possibilities for one's sexual and gender identity through social constructionist approach (Bedford, 2009, pp. 20-22). *Gender Trouble* caused a great deal of controversy among feminist critics after its publication in the 1990s, as it was a direct critique towards feminism and its idea of *woman*. *Gender Trouble* uses philosophy, anthropology, psychoanalysis, and feminist theory as its framework to locate the basis of gender and sex and how are these terms constructed in various discourses. Butler (1991) argues in her book, that gender is not a natural, biological fact, since not even the basis of *female* and *woman* as subjects are

stable This, according to Butler (1991), causes extreme contradiction inside the feminist criticism. Gender Trouble calls for a new form of criticism to be formed, one that does not accept the basis of sex and gender through feminism. Butler's philosophy draws much from Jacques Derrida's poststructuralist thinking, as she adapts the questioning of fundamental beliefs about sex and gender through language and meaning. Gender Trouble attacks the notion of gender and sex, claiming them to both to be social and political structures upheld by the patriarchal society that justifies the production of these heterosexual moulds (as cited by Lehtonen, 2003, p. 27). According to Butler, gender is not a subject nor a free collection of associated attributes but rather a performance that is dictated by expectations on how to perform one's gender (Butler, 1991, pp. 24-25). Thus, gender can be argued to be a realisation of "normalised behaviour" associated to genders and only exists as a subject-like truth through the condition of performance (Butler, 1991, p.33). This "normalised behaviour" is loosely but compulsively based on the ideology of sexual desires which positions heterosexuality and masculine behaviour on the top. Butler calls this hierarchical positioning of heterosexuality as *heterosexual matrix* (pp. 42-43).

Butler uses heterosexual matrix as the framework of "cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders, desires are naturalised." (p. 194) Through the heterosexual matrix, societies presume a compulsory and hierarchical heterosexual relation to other sexualities, pushing all the non-heterosexuals to the margins and diminishing them unequal in societies (p.43). The heterosexual matrix dichotomies gender to powerful, masculine men who are above weaker, feminine women. The heterosexual matrix expects men to be powerful and strong, only engaging into activities that the society accepts as masculine; this greatly restricts the notion of being a heterosexual man, as almost everything feminine is considered restricted for men. Women, on the other hand, have more freedom inside the matrix, as they can engage into activities that are masculine or feminine without the fear of prejudice, but women are also without a question expected to be weaker and more emotional than their male counterparts. It is precisely the prejudices, especially intersecting prejudices (one or more prejudice towards a certain group), that keep the minorities inside the margins of society. According to the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1991), there must always be a stabilised notion of natural sex which is gender is attributed through. Thus, by deviating the heterosexual matrix, other sexualities are born and perceived as abnormalities and less equal in the eyes of society.

To summarise Butler's idea on gender and performativity, genders are only realised as a subject through a set of expected performative acts that are controlled by the ideology of right kind of heterosexual desire. The flaw is, as Lehtonen (2003) argues, that no gender identity ever meets these requirements fully (pp. 24-27), thus underlining the problem in heterosexuality itself. Lehtonen (2003) points out that, much like heterosexuality, other sexual and gender identities that break the heterosexual matrix are not fixated and stable.

There are multiple ways people construct their gender and sexuality identities. Here I present the most common gender and sexual identities, as well as other key terminology, modelled after definitions given by the leading LGBTQ+ rights NGO in Finland, SETA ry (2021):

Homosexual: a person, who is physically and mentally attracted to the same gender. The term homosexual is often used to describe a man who is attracted to other men and the term *lesbian* for a woman who is attracted to other women.

Bisexual: a person, who is attracted to both male and female genders.

Transgender: a person, whose gender identity does not correspond to the gender the individual was signed at birth. A person who was born a male and *transitions* to a female is often described with the term *MtF (male-to-female)* or *FtM (female-to-male)* if a female transitions to male. The term is not to be confused with *transvestitism*, which related a fetish and is not a gender identity.

Queer: a political and academic term that aims to question societal norms about gender and sexuality. Queer can also be a gender identity, where the individual wishes not to define one's gender.

Pansexual: A person who is attracted to another person regardless of their gender or sexual identity.

Cisgender: a term used for individuals whose signed gender at birth corresponds with the expectations about gender in society. Most people are cisgenders. Cisgender can be seen as the counterpart to transgender.

LGBTQ+: an abbreviation from the words *lesbian*, *gay*, *bi*, *trans* and *queer*. The term is often used as an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities. The + sign at the end signifies that the term also includes lesser known sexual and gender identities, such as *intersexuals*, *asexuals* and *gender queers*.

Heterosexual: a person who is attracted to the opposite gender. Generally speaking, the term refers to the dichotomic idea of men being attracted to women and vice versa. However, some gender queers also identify as heterosexuals, so the term is not exclusive for the dichotomy of male-female relationships.

Therefore, it can be argued that sexualities and genders are in fact multi-layered constructs that over time, have gained a broader understanding. I myself understand sexuality as the projection of one's desires towards another person and gender as an identity everyone has the right to self-determine. They indeed are very social in nature, as they are negotiated and constructed socially (Lehtonen, 2003; Butler 1991). This also means, that sexualities and genders are present in schools and higher education institutions alike. Sexuality and gender are concepts that are intertwined in schools since the very first days to the very last, and schools are in a prominent role in constructing and negotiating gender and sexual identities (Lehtonen, 2003, p. 39). In a more recent article, Lehtonen (2014) highlights the teachers' role as an everyday negotiator of what is considered proper in terms of sexuality and gender (p. 118). Although the biologic-medicine approach to sexuality and gender continues to be challenged by feminists and queer theorists, heteronormativity is still visible in Finland and one of the major forces supporting heteronormativity is the unchallenged status of heterosexuality. Peake and Santaharju, both researchers who lived in a heterosexual relationship prior to their joint-effort publication *Entiset heterot: kuinka löysin itseni sateenkaaren alta* (2019) where ten Finnish people describe their coming out at an older age, state that the visibility and representation of LGBTQ+ themes have increased in Finnish media (p.13). However, Peake and Santaharju (2019) also state that the 2000's has seen a significant rise on opposing opinions about LGBTQ+ rights in Finland (pp. 13-14), and the usually the rhetoric of the opposing side relies strongly on the biologic-medicine view on gender and sexual identities that aims to stabilise heteronormativity in Finnish society.

3.2 Heteronormativity, norms, and the questioning of heterosexual hegemony

Although highly influential in questioning the heterosexual hegemony, Butler's heterosexual matrix was not the first theory trying to uncover the oppressive regime of heterosexuality. Rich (as cited by Lehtonen, 2003) coined the term *compulsory*

heterosexuality, as she problematised heterosexuality's status as an unquestionable norm in societies. Wittig (as cited by Lehtonen, 2003) described the hegemony of heterosexuality as *heterosexual contract*, which she modelled after Rousseau's social contract: societies have unspoken and invisible rules that control the socialisation of individuals (pp. 29-30). For Wittig (1980) it meant that an individual can only live free of persecution in society if the individual accepts heterosexuality as the norm. Similar to Butler, Wittig theorised that society forces the imagery of two opposing and complementary genders that are driven by heterosexual desire. Whereas Rich and Wittig solely focused on lesbianism as an opposite identity to heterosexuality, Butler's heterosexual matrix argues that all sexual identities and genders are bound and perceived through heterosexuality by their deviance on the heterosexual matrix, rather than just subjects that are other and outsiders to heterosexuality (Lehtonen, 2003 p. 31).

Butler never used the term heteronormativity when discussing about the presumption of heterosexuality as the norm in societies. The term itself was first used by Michael Warner in *Introduction: Fear of a Queer Planet (Social Texts, 1991 (29))*. Ever since the latter half of the 90's, the term heteronormativity has been used in increasing numbers in social sciences (Lehtonen, 2003, p.32). Thus, the questioning of heterosexuality's dominant role in societies takes many names and forms (Lehtonen, 2003, p. 31), and quite often these terms are overlapping yet have slightly different focuses. The element that combines all, whether it is about heterosexual contract or heterosexual matrix, is the fact they all question the often-unnoticed imposing of heterosexuality through social norms, on which individual is perceived through.

Kerpen and Marston (2019) summarise heteronormativity "discursive, social, material, and institutional practices that construct heterosexuality as the default, normal, and natural sexual orientation" (in Atkinson et al, 2019). Kerpen and Marston (2019) also point out that since heterosexuality is seen as a norm, its privileged status often makes it unquestioned and unchallenged. Though societies are drifting away from the biologic-medical approach to sexuality and gender, heterosexuality is essentially still a norm that queer theory actively questions. Norms are the guidelines on which an individual's expected social behaviour is often contrasted to (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021). In *Kasvatussosiologia (2015)*, a book almost all students pursuing a career in education have been familiarised with in Finland, Antikainen et al state that norms are based on values, and they present the desired dos and not-to-dos of individuals (p.28). In Antikainen et al (2015), norms are divided into two categories: official norms that are rules, orders and

guidelines regulated with laws, and unofficial ones that are socially constructed and accepted (pp.28-29). Most social norms are internalised through the process of socialisation, and they are made visible through sanctioning (*Antikainen et al, 2015, p. 29*). Sanctioning takes many forms, and in its most severe forms it can be ostracising and excluding the norm breaking individual from the social circle entirely (*Antikainen et al, 2015, p. 29*). The role of schools is fundamental from the perspective of norms and socialisation, as children spend most of their daytime in schools throughout their adolescence and thus, internalise the norms schools actively or silently endorse (*Alanko & Kaljunen, 2014, pp. 19-26*). It is apparent that heteronormativity is still present in Finnish schools, as many as domestic research proves (see *Lehtonen, 2003; Huotari, Törmä & Tuokkola, 2011; Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen & Palmer, 2012; Alanko & Kaljunen, 2014; Asikainen, 2006*). These results show that children belonging to LGBTQ+ were in all accounts more vulnerable for harassment, exclusion, and discrimination in schools than their heterosexual counterparts (*Alanko & Kujala, p. 26*). As teachers are in the guiding role for young students, it would be beneficial for both schools and Finnish society alike that teachers are equipped with substantial knowledge of LGBTQ+ themes, since teachers are both actively and silently endorsing social norms. For many students, teachers are role models. Teachers represent authority (*Antikainen, 2015, p. 254*), and thus act in a prominent role in norm conformity. However, *Alanko (2015, p. 29)* points out that LGBTQ+ students were more vulnerable for various forms of discrimination from peers and teachers alike, which signifies heteronormative thinking of Finnish teachers. It is also worth mentioning that children seldom have LGBTQ+ teachers as role models, since most LGBTQ+ teachers hide their identity from students in fear of discrimination (*Lehtonen, 2007, p. 27*).

3.3 Heteronormativity, Finnish law, and Finnish teachers

In 2014, the Act on Equality between women and men was revised and updated in Finland. Section 1 determines that any kind of discrimination based on gender identity is prohibited (*Finlex, 2014*). Sections 5 and 6 also affect the work of teachers: section 5 demands institutions providing education actively promoting equality between men and women and section 6 takes a more concrete approach to the matter, as it demands schools explicitly to provide an equality plan that is revised and updated every three years. In this plan the current state of equality among men and women is examined and further plans for improvement is conducted. Unfortunately, whereas section 1 notably mentions

gender identity, any terms suggesting gender identity in school contexts is nowhere to be found.

Other legal documents that bind schools and teachers alike in Finland are the national curriculums, supervised by the Finnish Ministry of Education. National curriculums set the frames for all subjects taught in schools and determines what has to be included in the teaching of every subject. Most notable of the curriculums is the national curriculum for compulsory basic education (*perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelma*, shortened to *POPS*) that arcs over grades one to nine (ages seven to fifteen). The national curriculum for compulsory basic education was last revised and updated in 2016 (*POPS, 2016*), the previous version was revised in 2004. The old version did not mention sexual and gender minorities in teaching or school contexts. However, multiculturalism and ethnic minorities are mentioned several times (*POPS, 2004*). The old national curriculum based itself upon values of equality and human rights, where the aim of education is to promote gender equality but there are little to no mentions of sexual equity. Much of the education about sexuality and gender diversity was implemented to teaching of biology and health studies, with the words “examine different expression of sexuality” (*POPS, 2004, s. 184*). The newer, and thus the latest, version of national curriculum also has no mentions of diverse gender and sexual identities in its base values, everyday school life nor in teaching (*POPS, 2016*). In multiple occasions, equality and equity are mentioned and special emphasis is taken to see each and every student as a valued individual as they are. On school subject level, much has not changed in terms of sexual and gender diversity and majority of it is still pushed into the teaching of biology and health studies, mainly focusing on genetics and development of bodies in biology and age-appropriate self-awareness of developing one’s sexual identity in health studies (*POPS, 2016, pp. 379-383 and pp. 398-403*). As sexual and gender diversity is barely mentioned in the national curriculum, it can be argued that the teaching of LGBTQ+ matters and inclusion heavily relies on the teachers and their willingness to bring forth these matters into their teaching as there is no direct demand from the national curriculum to do so. This arguably proves that heteronormative is invisible, yet very persistent in legal documents that bind and guide teaching in Finland, and therefore, it norm conforms heteronormativity by giving sexual and gender minorities the silent treatment.

Another indicator of heteronormativity in schools is the school material used. There have been some studies about gender and sexual diversity (see *Sirén, 2018*). However, most of

the studies regarding gender and sexuality representation in Finnish school material, however, strongly concentrates solely on male and female representations and other gender and sexual identities are pushed to the margins. In my own master's seminar study, I examined an English course book used in Finnish high schools with queer representation as my scope and concluded that they are present but very minimal, often stereotypical, omitting other ethnicities by being predominantly white, and almost exclusively taken to classroom discourse only if the teacher or students are active. Since there are no recent studies about gender or sexual diversity in Finnish school materials, I argue that not much positive change has happened in terms of LGBTQ+ themes in school materials. Lehtonen (in *Suortamo et al, 2010*) also noted this in his research about heteronormativity in different stages of Finnish education and raises his concern in the lack of diverse school materials and the awareness of heteronormativity by teachers. Teachers also play a prominent role in choosing the books used in education, as they themselves choose what materials and books are used. When this is combined with the fact that most publication companies that provide schoolbooks and materials in Finland are entirely commercial and not regulated by the national curriculum, there is a greater risk that LGBTQ+ themes never present themselves in school materials at all, thus making heteronormativity harder to question. It seems, despite laws and national curriculum, teachers in Finland predominantly act under heteronormative thinking. One way to prove this is to examine the hidden curriculum. Karjalainen (1996) theorises the hidden curriculum to be the opposite of the actual curriculum. Whereas the actual curriculum is built on consciously selected values, is modified by laws, and represent the ethical backbone of schools, the hidden curriculum is the subconscious manifestation of teachers passing on and teaching norms, social patterns and personal values that are not mentioned in the actual curriculum (Karjalainen, 1996, p. 141). Teacher's attitudes towards LGBTQ+ themes in schools were first examined in 2010 by Lehtonen.

In 2010, Lehtonen together with *Opettaja-lehti* magazine, conducted a nation-wide survey in Finland about teachers' attitudes and experiences of LGBTQ+ themes in schools, the first ever of its kind. *Opettaja-lehti* is a periodical published by the Trade Union of Education in Finland. 1002 teachers from all over Finland took part and in 2012 Lehtonen published an article where he analysed the results. As a generalisation, Lehtonen (2012a) states that generally speaking teachers are accepting of gender and sexual minorities, but majority expressed negative feelings towards expressing non-heterosexuality in schools. Thirteen percent of the respondents stated they were non-heterosexuals. 84 percent

stated that they felt further education for teachers about LGBTQ+ themes was not necessary, whereas 68 percent of LGBTQ+ teachers felt the same (*Opettaja-lehti, 2010 s. 16-18*). This might be due to the general perception of teachers are not seen as sexual beings (*Lehtonen, 2003, p. 103*), this obviously being problematic as everyone to an extent is a sexual being. According to the results, LGBTQ+ teachers were more interested and motivated in discussing about LGBTQ+ themes in schools and felt that it would be necessary to increase open discussion about these themes, whereas majority of their heterosexual counterparts saw it as unnecessary and problematic (*Opettaja-lehti, 2010*). Therefore, LGBTQ+ teachers have to adapt to the heteronormative regime of Finnish schools and thus, they cannot harness their potential in breaking the heteronormative norms in fear of discrimination (*Lehtonen, 2012a, p.27; Lehtonen, 2014 p. 122-126*). Not to mention this unfortunately negates positive LGBTQ+ role models for LGBTQ+ students in Finnish schools.

Therefore, I argue there is substantial evidence of the predominantly heteronormative discourse in schools. It acknowledges the presence of gender and sexual minorities, however, this discourse selectively omits non-heterosexual gender and sexual identities, when they are seen as a problem or a threat to the stabilised ideology of heteronormativity in schools. Diverse sexual and gender identities are discouraged to be shown in schools by teachers and students belonging to LGBTQ+, through possible sanctioning for breaking the norms. The climate of fear then negates positive outcomes and possible increasing of LGBTQ+ themes in Finnish schools due to the fact even LGBTQ+ teachers silently accept heteronormativity. This form of apparent acceptance thus upholds heteronormativity. Generally speaking, it could be argued that teachers are openminded when it comes to LGBTQ+ themes but in practice this seldom happens in school contexts. Another group that is said to be very openminded for change in schools are teacher students.

3.3.1 Teacher education in Finland and LGBTQ+ supportive education in subject teacher training at the University of Oulu

For the purpose of thesis, my main focus is on subject teacher training in Finland when discussing heteronormative practices in higher education context, but my theoretical

framework also revolves around Finnish teacher education in general. Major differences to other teachers, such as class teachers who spend the majority of their studies with pedagogics and in their jobs spend most of the time teaching the same class, is that subject teachers major in one to two subjects taught at schools and study 60 ECTS worth of pedagogy. These 60 ECTS are the same what class teachers also study during the first two years of their university studies in Finland. Since by law, universities in Finland are guaranteed an autonomous status, the course materials and subject might vary depending on the university of study. At the University of Oulu, the 60 ECTS correspond with the topical studies of Master of Arts in Education. Noteworthy is that since subject teachers also spend less time with their students, from an hour to three per week, and mainly work at upper comprehensive schools (ages 13 to 15) or high schools (ages 16 to 19). Currently, almost all higher education institutions in Finland provide subject teacher training and annually, the University of Oulu trains around 90 subject teachers in its facilities according to an inquire I made via email. The survey of this study was sent to a total of 92 trainees who participated in the subject teacher training programme during a relatively recent academic year.

When examining the structure of subject teacher studies at the University of Oulu, there seems to be only one course that directly assesses gender. The course is part of master's studies. Titled as *Kasvatuksen yhteiskunnalliskulttuuriset kontekstit* (sociocultural contexts in education), the segment where learning objectives are presented states that after completing the course, the student is able to recognise the meaning of social status and gender in educational context. The segment where the contents of the course are presented, one of the bullet points states that the course will deal questions regarding gender, sexuality, and intersectionality. Lastly, the list of study materials includes *Käsikirja sukupuoleen* (Juvonen et al. 2010), which as a comprehensive study book to gender and sexuality in Finnish.

On paper, there is reason to assume the emergence LGBTQ+ themes in subject teacher training at the University of Oulu. However, my data suggests that LGBTQ+ themes seldom made an appearance and they mostly manifested by an initiation from a student, not from a university lecturer or other staff. This will be further discussed in section 4. The absence of LGBTQ+ related education in subject teacher training at the University of Oulu aligns itself with previous studies about gender and sexuality minorities' presence in Finnish class and subject teacher training, which will be discussed further in the next section.

3.3.2 Heteronormativity and Finnish teacher training

As discussed in section 3.3, teachers generally are open and supportive of LGBTQ+ themes in Finland (see *Lehtonen, 2012a*). On 12th of January 2021, the Finnish National Broadcasting Company (YLE) published an article in which many teacher students criticised the lack of gender and sexual diversity in teacher training (YLE, 2021, retrieved 18th of June). The open-mindedness of teacher students in Finland has been studied (see *Niemenmaa H. & Niemenmaa J, (2006), Palojärvi, H. (2010)*). In 2010, Palojärvi's master's thesis examined teacher students' attitudes and tolerance towards minorities, including gender and sexual minorities. The results showed that contrasted to general public, the teacher students viewed themselves more openminded towards minorities (*Palojärvi, 2010, pp. 38-40*). As a generalisation, Palojärvi (2010) states that improving the societal status of members belonging to LGBTQ+ was important to many teacher students, as 70 percent of the respondents would grant similar marriage and adoption rights to non-heterosexual couples. Niemenmaa & Niemenmaa (2006) concluded in their earlier study that teacher and teacher students were more likely to have a positive view on sexual minorities than the general populous. However, Lehtonen (2012a) points out that sexuality and gender in terms of teacher students in Finland has not been studied as extensively as, i.e., in Anglo-American countries (p. 24), underlining the need for further studies.

Lehtonen himself has spent a great deal in studying LGBTQ+ matters in higher education and school contexts in Finland. He was part of *TASUKO*, a nationwide programme organised by Finnish Ministry of Education and University of Helsinki to increase and include gender and sexual sensitive education in teacher training. The programme run from 2008 to 2010. In Suortamo et al (2010), Syrjäläinen & Kujala state that even though the extensive legislation and demands by national curriculum, equality in gender and sexuality terms has remained in the margins and has no space in everyday school life and teacher education (p. 25). This has a direct consequence, as the passivity of teacher training produces passive teachers in terms of gender and sexual diversity, and by extension LGBTQ+ matters as well (*Syrjäläinen & Kujala, 2010 p. 25*).

Syrjäläinen & Kujala (2010) offer research made at University of Tampere and its teacher training as an example (p. 34). According to the study, gender sensitive education has not

gained significant space in teacher training nor in the curricula. The handling of the term gender was perceived as arbitrary and difficult. Therefore, the teacher students felt like they did not receive adequate skills to act equally in their jobs in terms of gender diversity (p. 34). Syrjäläinen & Kujala (2010) make a strong argument that the ideology of neutrality is very persistent in teacher training in Finland. According to this, the teacher education itself is already seen as equal and thus, there is no need to increase education in gender and sexual diversity (p. 34). At the same time, teacher students and teacher trainers themselves criticise the unnecessary gendering of students into i.e., boys and girls, and emphasise using gender neutral terms such as learner or student (p. 34). Syrjäläinen & Kujala (2010) argue that one of the motives behind the ideology of teacher education's neutrality stems from the idea of Finnish society being equal already, thus there is no need to emphasise gender diversity in teacher education (p. 35). However, at the same research proves that in both teacher education and in schools, stereotypes of gender are, intentionally or unintentionally, produced and enforced (p. 35). Syrjäläinen (2011) concluded the results in another article (Jauhiainen et al in Lehtonen, 2011) that the term gender was practically unheard of among early childhood, class, and subject teachers alike (p. 37).

Lehtonen took part in examining the results of TASUKO in University of Turku and University of Lapland. In University of Turku, subject teacher students were the least active in taking part of a survey examining gender and sexual diversity awareness in teacher training (Jauhiainen et al in Lehtonen, 2011, p. 35). One explanation was that as a mere one-year lasting unit, the time subject teachers spend studying pedagogy is timewise short and already densely packed, therefore explaining the challenge of incorporating new themes of study in subject teacher training (Jauhiainen et al in Lehtonen, 2011, p. 35). Among the respondents, including a variety of different teacher students, great variation was detected in acceptance of teaching gender diversity, majority however being in favour for it (p. 38). In University of Lapland, researchers found out that knowledge of gender diversity among teacher students and university staff had increased over the years, but stereotype-enforcing and gendered practices were found (pp. 36-37). Overall, gender sensitive education is still very much marginalised in Finnish teacher education according to Syrjäläinen (in Jauhiainen et al in Lehtonen, 2011, p. 39) but the teacher students themselves seem to be interested in increasing their knowledge of gender and sexuality sensitive education. University of Oulu also took part in TASUKO and set plans to improve gender sensitive teaching by implementing it in the continuum

of teacher training by making it a persistent theme (*Heikkinen et al in Lehtonen, 2011 p. 42*). As there is no research on how successful the implementing was, and currently subject teacher training at University of Oulu has potentially one course where gender and sexual diversity are discussed, it is difficult not to align it with presumption of heteronormative discourse being in power.

Perhaps the most concrete evidence of heteronormative practises in Finnish subject teacher training is the report of three subject teacher students. In autumn of 2009, Norema, Pietilä and Purtonen from University of Helsinki did their teaching internship and reported their findings as a part of University of Helsinki's TASUKO programme. Based on their observations and experiences, all three stated they did not feel like they received enough education in gender sensitive and gender equality topics (*Heikkinen et al in Lehtonen 2011, p. 58*). Their report also states that stereotyping and dichotomising gender in two, opposing and differently acting in terms of teaching, was very visible in classrooms (*pp. 58-59*). In their report, they also point out that there is an evident lack on the teacher trainers' side with handling gender diverse topics (*p. 59*).

Lehtonen (*in Suortamo et al, 2010*), examined heteronormativity in different stages of Finnish education, from early childhood education to tertiary education and points out that sexuality and gender are both practices present in all forms of education (*p. 87*). Lehtonen (2010) argues that over time, heteronormativity becomes more elusive and transparent in higher forms of education (*pp. 91-103*), being at its strongest in early childhood education and lower comprehensive schools where, for example, dividing students into boy and girl groups is still very common (*pp. 91-92*). In higher education, Lehtonen (2010) problematises the lack of research in heteronormativity (*p. 103*). As the purpose of universities is to publish high-class research, the omitting of heteronormativity from research makes the quality of research questionable as the heteronormative practices remain unchallenged (*p. 103*).

Lehtonen examined this further in 2012, a few years after TASUKO had come to its end. In his article *Gender awareness in research on teacher education in Finland (in Tolonen et al, 2012)*, Lehtonen argues the same stance of neutrality in teacher education as Syrjäläinen & Kujala did in 2010 (*p. 235*). Teacher education receives a minimal amount of criticism as the tendency to see it as gender neutral is prevalent, inequity among genders is not seen as a major problem in teacher education, the subject itself is regarded highly political and the general unwillingness to change (*Lehtonen, 2012b, pp. 236-237*).

One of the problems Lehtonen raises is the lack of material that adequately assesses gender and sexual diversity in teacher training as a whole (p. 237). As there is no material, chances of actual change are less likely to occur. Then the occurrence is solely left on the shoulders of teacher students and trainees' own willingness to bring forth these subjects, a solution also Lehtonen suggests (s. 237).

Despite the launch of TASUKO and different Finnish universities taking various concrete actions in their efforts of assimilating gender and sexual diverse topics in teacher education, the transition has not been as successful as one could have hoped. Whereas majority of teacher students and teacher trainers express an openminded attitude towards both gender and sexual minorities, the lack of concrete training and resistance from other teacher students and teacher trainers keeps the whole field of teacher education passive towards full inclusion of gender and sexual diversity in teacher education. It is also notable that, whereas not in majority role, some teacher students and teacher trainees simply do not wish to educate themselves on the matter. As teacher education in Finland seldom receives any criticism due to its presumption of being gender neutral and thus, equal to all, the heteronormative practices it sustains are left unchecked and unchallenged. Therefore, I theorise that heteronormativity is an unchallenged practice in Finnish teacher education that is upheld by passivity, unwillingness to change practice and the lack of training in LGBTQ+ matters. As a conclusion, I state that teacher training in Finland is still very heteronormative in nature, and it cannot hide behind the façade of neutrality as it clearly is not. However, in increasing numbers both teacher students and trainers alike have long wished for concrete measures from the Ministry of Education and Finnish universities, there might still be something left to salvage from TASUKO. But that takes concrete actions: making the heteronormative practices in teacher training visible. I will take this concrete measure in section 4 of this study but prior to that I will briefly introduce content analysis as a methodological tool for interpreting qualitative data.

3.4 Content analysis as a tool of interpretation for qualitative data

Bengtsson (2017) describes qualitative data that is collected from face-to-face interactions and open questions essentially expressions of the phenomena with words (p. 13). As researcher cannot give meaning to the data using statistical analysis, another

method for interpretation is needed. One such method is content analysis (*Bengtsson, 2017, p. 13*). As this thesis uses both data from a qualitative survey consisting of open questions and transcribed data from interviews, content analysis offers an interpretation tool in creating meaningfulness from the collected written data. Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2002) highlight, that the aim of content analysis is to combine and contrast the findings with pre-existing theory and research to form a coherent and logical whole (*p. 91*).

Bengtsson (2017) divides the analysis of the data through content analysis into four steps: (1) decontextualisation, where researcher systematically goes through the data to grasp the essence of “what is going on” (*p. 11*) by identifying meaningful units from the text. These meaningful units are kept separate from the actual data and must be written as they are presented in the raw data to ensure no important units are lost (*p. 11*). As the units are identified, the analysis proceeds to (2) recontextualisation, where the data is reread through the meaningful units in order to compress the data and ridding it from unnecessary items (*p. 12*). The next step is (3) categorisation, where meaningful units are categorised under broader themes (*p. 12*.) The last phase is (4) compilation, which is the process of actual writing of the findings from the data through categorised meaningful units. To support the findings through meaningful units, the text should include quotations and other citations from the gathered data (*p. 12*). The trustworthiness of the analysis is then peered through credibility, reliability, transferability, and confirmability (*p. 13*)

Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2002) offer a few ways to conduct a qualitative content analysis, such as data-based, and theory-based (*pp. 91-98*). Both methods are conducted according to similar steps Bengtsson (2017) offers, the difference being that in data-based content analysis the data itself provides the meaningful units and themes, whereas in theory-based analysis the data is contrasted to a theoretical frame that has the meaningful units and themes already theorised. Then the data itself is contrasted to the theoretical framework to see how well the theorised meaningful units and themes occur in the data (*Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2002, p. 95*).

I formed a theory of hidden and rarely challenged heteronormativity in Finnish teacher training based on the previous research by Lehtonen (2003, 2011, 2012ab), Syrjäläinen & Kujala (*in Suortamo et al, 2010*) and the research made under TASUKO programme that were all presented in sections 3.3.1, 3.3.2 and 3.3.3. I conducted my theoretical framework with the same themes that I based my qualitative survey and interviews on:

(1) *Self-reflection about one's sexual and gender identity and the recipients' knowledge of LGBTQIA+ related matters in general*, (2) *Teacher education at the University of Oulu and LGBTQIA+ themes in subject teacher training at University of Oulu* and (3) *Teaching and LGBTQIA+ related matters: recipients' teaching and employing LGBTQIA+ themes into one's teaching*. As my background research indicates, teacher students tend to be more open minded in comparison to the general populous. Thus, the data should indicate this openness by teacher students expressing accepting attitudes towards LGBTQ+ community with some taking the opposing stance. The background research also indicates that there is an evident lack of LGBTQ+ themed education in subject teacher training in Finland, and my data aims to prove this to also happens at University of Oulu. Therefore, the data should indicate that the teacher students have not received much formal education on LGBTQ+ matters on behalf of the University of Oulu, and therefore it is highly marginalised. This, however, does not out rule the possibility of this occurring in some responses. Lastly, the passivity of both teacher students at University of Oulu and the university itself uphold the practices that then uphold heteronormativity in subject teacher training. To support my findings, I present the data gathered from interviews to give further insight to the practices that maintain heteronormativity in subject teacher training at University of Oulu. In the next section, I will present the findings and analysis of my data. Before each section, I give a brief summary of my theory and present the framework and its meaningful units that I expect to occur in the data.

4. Analysis and findings

The analysis and findings section is divided into four subsections. In the first three, I have contrasted the data of my qualitative survey to theory-based framework according to the standards of qualitative content analysis. This means that I have determined the themes before-hand and expect certain meaningful units to appear in the data as the analysis proceeds. All of the themes are based on the survey questions and aim to critically evaluate the heteronormative practices in subject teacher training at University of Oulu. In addition, each section will deal with the results of my interviews as they offer a broadened insight to each section, since the questions of the interview were based on the results of the qualitative survey. Each subsection has a slightly different scope, but they are all bound together by the concept of heteronormativity that pushes LGBTQ+ content to the margins in subject teacher education at the University of Oulu. In subsection 4.1 I have provided a graphic example of the theoretical framework, where themes, actual data, reduced data, and meaningful units are presented. In all of the sections, a similar process of analysis has been conducted with different themes and meaningful units that are fully explained in the text. The fourth section is the summary part.

4.1 Subject teacher students at University of Oulu and attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community

For the first part of the analysis, I aimed to chart the general attitude of subject teacher students towards LGBTQ+ community. This was done by asking subject teacher students the following questions (see appendices A): (2) *The abbreviation LGBTQAPIA (shortened to LGBTQ+) is an umbrella term for various gender and sexual identities. Describe situation(s) where you have come in contact with the term,* (3) *How would you interpret the terms “gender” and “sexuality” and how do they differ from one another in your opinion,* and (4) *The LGBTQ+ community has recently gained more exposure in the media and everyday life. Has your knowledge towards LGBTQ+ themes, i.e., the struggles the community faces, increased during the past couple of years?* The LGBTQ+ community has gained more visibility in societies and media in recent years (see section 3.1). This should indicate that recipients are familiar or unfamiliar with the term LGBTQ+ through meaningful

unit *knows* and *does not know*. As previous research indicates, teacher students tend to be more openminded towards minorities (e.g., Palojärvi, 2010). Teacher students are also more likely to indicate willingness to educate themselves on LGBTQ+ matters. This should also mean when asked to define the terms “gender” and “sexuality”, the data should indicate that majority of the participants define gender as a performative, *social construct* that is separate from sexuality (Butler, 1991) rather than a *biological fact* that dictates both gender and sexuality. As LGBTQ+ community has increasingly gained space in media and public talk, my initial assumption is that the teacher students’ knowledge has increased by meaningful units *recognises*. Therefore, I theorise that through content analysis, the data should indicate that teacher students that took part to this survey know what the abbreviation LGBTQ+ means, they are able to differentiate between sexuality and gender and drift away from gender being a biological fact and acknowledge the disadvantaged position of LGBTQ+ individuals in society. As each question is presented and analysed, I will also present the theory and meaningful units that indicate the findings from data. Meaningful units are written in italics. What is more, all questions in this section went through a similar process, where the selected theme and meaningful units were predetermined and contrasted to the data from the survey. To provide further insight to the themes under discussion, I have added additional data from my interviews. I have also provided a graphic example before question two to show how the data was analysed in terms of theory-based content analysis.

Theme/head category	Original statement	Simplified	Meaningful units
Familiarity with the term LGBTQ+	“The term has mostly occurred in the media.” “Social media, circle of friends, various events.” “Social media, news. Some of my friends are part of the community.” “This is the first time I hear of this.”	Knows through media or social media. Knows through social media, news or has a real-life connection. Does not know or has no connection.	Knows Does not know

Figure 1: The theoretical frame for question two. A similar pattern is applied to questions two, three, four, six, seven, nine and ten.

Out of 36 recipients, 34 stated that they were familiar with the term LGBTQ+. 17 respondents stated that social media or media and news in general were the primary ways

of getting to know the abbreviation LGBT+. Another described way of getting familiarised with the term was through a real-life connection, such as “through a circle of friends”, “I’m myself part of the community” or “I have actively participated to Pride Marches in Helsinki and Oulu”. The real-life connection was a staggering 21 responses, which means nearly 60 percent of the respondents are in close contact with the term almost daily. Only two respondents stated that they have never come across the abbreviation before, one of the responses stating, “this is the first time I familiarise myself with the term”.

Seven respondents stated that they have come across the term during their university studies. Six stated the term to have appeared in their major subject studies, i.e., “in Finnish literary courses we have studied LGBT literature”, “in English and Swedish studies the term has come across in other students’ presentations” and “during my studies, I have had to read about queer theory”. Two stated that they have specifically come across the term in their teacher training, “I wrote an essay about LGBTQ+ themes in one of my pedagogy courses” and “my bachelor’s thesis deals with LGBT+ themes”. One respondent out of these seven stated that they have introduced the LGBT+ community to students in their teaching in upper comprehensive school. Since almost all respondents are familiar with the term LGBT+, there is a lot of potential for future discussions of said themes in teacher training by teachers students. Eventually, this could increase the number of LGBT+ themes being taught in Finnish schools but as Lehtonen (*in Tolonen et al, 2012*) examined, when bringing up of such themes is left solely on the shoulders of teacher students, it seldom manifests in higher education and later in work-life, as the survey in *Opettaja-lehti* magazine (2010) shows. LGBTQ+ themes seem to be in the margins of higher education according to teacher students at University of Oulu, since only seven stated that they have come across them in their university studies. However, it seems that the few occurrences of LGBTQ+ themes mostly happened due to the activity of teacher students themselves, rather than the themes being presented to them by lecturers or teacher trainers.

When asked about the dominance of social media as the primary source for LGBTQ+ related themes, interviewee 1 (shortened as I1) stated the following:

Interviewer: “Why do you think social media or news are the primary source for LGBTQ+ related news and themes and not, for example, university studies or teacher training? One of the background materials in educational sociology deals with gender and sexuality.”

I1: "Well, as a member of LGBTQ+ community myself, it's easier to find like-minded people over the internet in contrast to just randomly start a casual chitchat of it during teacher training. There never seems to be will to discuss these things at teacher training."

In their answer, I1 refers to a group of "like-minded" people, referring to LGBTQ+ community members and allies. The internet offers an easy medium for communicating and exchange of ideas and it has gained an immense popularity among LGBTQ+ community members. Partially, the popularity among LGBTQ+ stems from the anonymity: the internet offers a safe way for communication without the pressure of labels and outing, the act of forcing an individual out of the closet (see Lucero, 2017). I1 also refers to discussing LGBTQ+ themes in teacher training with a tone of uncomfortableness, signifying that discussing of such themes are not encouraged or the speaker feels unsafe speaking of such themes in fear of discrimination, outing or ostracising.

Interviewee 2 (shortened as I2) responded to the same question as follows:

I2: "I feel like there hasn't really been opportunities to talk about it in a natural manner, you know. Without the feeling of me personally outing myself and forcing the theme upon people. I can't remember LGBTQ+ themes coming up during educational sociology either."

Much like I1, I2's answer offers a similar insight to the possible discussion of LGBTQ+ themes in subject teacher training at the University of Oulu. In this sense, "natural manner" refers to introducing a new subject of talk without the fear of contradiction. As I2 refers to LGBTQ+ themes' introduction as the opposite, it signifies the same as in I1's answer: it is controversial.

Whereas social media has been titled as a safe haven for LGBTQ+ youth (see *Lucero, 2017*), it seldom appears in higher education context, though there is potential. The passivity of teacher training (*Syrjäläinen & Kujala, 2010*) versus the activity of teacher students seems to favour the university by not creating a space safe enough from fear of discrimination. Overall, most respondents were familiar with the term LGBT+, signifying the immediate presence of LGBT+ themes in teacher students' lives. It seems, however, that these themes are not an active part of the teacher students' lives in the world of academia unless they themselves actively promote them.

In question three the respondents were asked to define the terms “gender” and “sexuality” according to their own words to see whether they view the terms dependant on one another. Since the theory about teacher students open-mindedness is relevant in this question as well, I theorised that more respondents would favour a view, where gender is seen as a multi-layered social construct rather than a biological entity that determines both gender and sexuality and divides them into two, separate and complementary units. Thus, the theme for the question was the respondents view on gender as a biological fact versus a social constructivist view. Therefore, the meaningful units in this data should be *biological fact* and *social construct*. In addition, the question asked the respondents to define “sexuality” as well. The reason behind this is to determine whether the respondents would see sexuality as a direct consequence of one’s gender identity which is dictated by heteronormative view on gender and sexuality.

All 36 recipients made a clear division between the terms. All recipients defined “gender” as a part of one’s identity and “sexuality” as the projection of one’s sexual desires and emotions. At first glance, it would look like the teacher students would favour a view where gender is in fact socially built. However, twenty respondents defined solely or partially their definition of “gender” on biology, giving definitions such as “gender is based on biological terms”, “chromosomes dictate whether a person is a man or a woman” and “gender is a way to categorise people according to biological factors”. Out of those twenty, sixteen respondents shared a view that gender is based on biology, and four respondents give a hybrid definition that was a mixture of both biology and based on individual’s own experience. These respondents gave definitions such as “gender can either be a biological entity or based on individuals own experience”, “gender can mean two things: it can be a biological gender or a social gender”. In terms of my theoretical framework, *biological fact* was the meaningful unit for sixteen responses. To contrast, eight respondents gave a definition where they based their idea of gender being a social construct, where self-definition is in key role of building one’s gender identity. This means in terms of meaningful units that eight responses fell under the category of *social construct*. As there were four responses that were a hybrid compounds of both *biological fact* and *social construct*, up to twelve responses had *social construct* as their meaningful unit. Eight remaining responses were not able to give a clear enough definition that would reveal necessary meaningful units, stating i.e., “now days the terms are very difficult to explain as definitions vary so much”.

To summarise, 55 percent of the respondents defined the term “gender” relying on biology. Of those 55 percent, 25 percent gave a hybrid definition that was a mixture of both biology and social constructivism. To contrast, 22 percent defined “gender” as a social construct. Based on this, it seems that majority of the subject teacher students from University of Oulu that took part to this study favour the heteronormative view on gender that uses biology as a naturalised explanation to it. As all respondents did separate “gender” and “sexuality” from another and did not state that they are inherently linked seems to indicate that the general perception of “gender” and “sexuality” has shifted from purely biological view to a more hybrid view that combines elements from biology and social constructivism.

As underlying heteronormative practices are proven to still exist in Finnish teacher education and schools (e.g., Suortamo et al, 2010; Lehtonen 2003, 2012ab) it is no surprise that majority of the teacher students participating to this study have a heteronormative view on gender. Whereas teacher students are said to be more openminded than the general populous, non-heteronormative view on gender is still marginalised. If the practices in teacher education and the omitting of LGBTQ+ themes in Finnish higher education are left unchallenged, the teacher education institutions train another generation of teacher that are not fully equipped to deal with LGBT+ students in schools and fulfil their legal requirements of gender sensitive teaching.

I1 and I2 stated the following, when asked the changes in their view on gender during university studies:

Interviewer: “Has your view on gender as a term changed during your university studies, particularly in teacher training?”

I1: “Definitely has changed during my literature studies. In there I have read a few short stories and novels about gender and feminism that opened my eyes to the social side of gender. I can’t think of any specific moment in teacher training that has changed my view. We never really discussed about gender during teacher training.”

I1 describes their understanding to have drastically changed during their university studies. “Opened my eyes” refers to that change to have been personally important, which in return represents a keener understanding of LGBTQ+ themes. This also means that some programmes at the University of Oulu clearly have LGBTQ+ themes in a visible

role whereas said themes have not made a major breakthrough in subject teacher training, which aligns itself with the results of Lehtonen's research on *TASUKO* programme.

I2: "I remember during my Swedish courses we had a lengthy discussion about pronouns and how Swedish had recently adapted a gender neutral third singular pronoun. From there I learned a great deal about gender and how it can be socially constructed. I remember one of my peers asking in a meeting with our teacher trainer about this said pronoun and the answer was 'sure you can teach about it but do not expect the students to make much out of it'. That was probably the closes I got about talking of gender in teacher training."

Again, much like I1, I2 has also encountered LGBTQ+ themes in their major studies, but I2 has also encountered them in teacher training. Noteworthy here is the slightly negative description of the occurrence in a meeting, where the teacher trainer's attitude perhaps reflects their negative attitude towards LGBTQ+ themes, lack of knowledge or the trainer assumes the students' disinterest and ridicule may impact the way of handling these themes. This further indicates that as in Norema et al. (2010), the teacher trainers also need further education in LGBTQ+ themes in school context.

I1 is majoring in Finnish language and literature and I2 majors in foreign languages. As they both state, there seems to be minimal room for discussion about gender in teacher training and when it occasionally happens, not much attention is paid to it as *TASUKO* results show. Teacher trainers would benefit a great deal in gender sensitive training and to extension, teacher students would gain more broadened view to it. This could potentially stop the heteronormative practices seeping into actual work life. To state that Finnish universities do not deal with LGBTQ+ themes, and to extension that LGBTQ+ themes are absent in Finnish teacher education is false, but the data aligns itself with previous research where LGBTQ+ themes and gender sensitive teaching have not made a breakthrough in Finnish teacher education (Syrjäläinen & Kujala, 2010; Norema et al, 2010). Question 1, that was left out of the actual analysis as it provided no useful data in questioning heteronormative practices in teacher education at University of Oulu, gives an interesting insight: those who study humanities (i.e., foreign languages or literature) tended to be keener on discussing about LGBTQ+ themes than those who study natural sciences. The chance rises if the respondent identifies themselves as non-heterosexual or a woman. Whereas no clear conclusion can be made, it seems that in humanities the

chance of LGBTQ+ themes are likely to occur, but this does not seem to transpire to teacher education at University of Oulu.

Question four asked the respondents whether they are aware of the vulnerability and the struggle of LGBTQ+ community members face in their everyday lives. For this question's analysis, I chose "respondent recognises the disadvantaged position of LGBTQ+ community members in societies" as the theme. As domestic research proves, students belonging to LGBTQ+ community were in almost all accounts more vulnerable towards discrimination and have higher suicide rates than their heterosexual cisgender peers (THL, 2020; Antikainen, 2012). As the Finnish national curriculum obliges teachers to support students recognise gendered patterns in everyday lives (PPOS, 2014, p. 24), teachers and teacher students should be aware of the disadvantaged position of gender and sexual minorities. Therefore, the meaningful units regarding question four were *recognises* and *does not recognise*.

In total of 31 responses, the meaningful unit through content analysis revealed the meaningful unit to be *recognises*. This means over 86 percent of the respondents acknowledge the struggles LGBTQ+ community members face in almost all aspects of life. Much like the responses to question two, the data in question four revealed once again the importance of social media: "my knowledge has increased a lot, mostly through social media, foreign and domestic news outlets; "I do feel like my knowledge of LGBTQ+ discrimination has increased through the visibility the community has gained recently, particularly in social media" and "I feel like it's more openly discussed about how gay and trans people face scrutiny everyday". Four responses cited the recent public discussion about "trans law" in Finland, which still demands castration after transitioning. As of now, the government is looking for responses and ways to dismantle this law. Overall, almost all respondents recognise the disadvantageous situation gender and sexual minorities face but there were five responses that through analysis fell under *does not recognise*. What is troubling in all of these responses is the fact they all carried a very negative view towards LGBTQ+ community: "I don't know about the increase in knowledge, but it seems like they just push any letter in that combination", "my knowledge hasn't increased. The Bible teaches homosexuality to be a sin" and "has not increased, I'm not interested. I don't discriminate against them so that should be enough". Whereas only a marginal phenomenon in this survey, it seems old harmful attitudes still reside in some teacher students.

When asked about open discussion of LGBTQ+ discrimination and its occurrence in subject teacher training, both I1 and I2 responded that discrimination is discussed but is rather unilateral:

Interviewer: "Most teacher students in this survey seem to recognise the discrimination LGBTQ+ member face. Has there been any occasions in teacher education where this was assessed?"

I2: "Not maybe in a way where the whole picture is taken into consideration, like how gay or trans people are mistreated in workplaces or how suicide rates are higher, but a top favourite is the kids using 'gay' as a slur and how to deal with it. Especially among boys."

It seems that according to I1, the handling of discrimination against LGBTQ+ community is rather one sided and emphasises bullying in schools over all other aspects. As discrimination in workplaces or parental rights are left omitted, the risk of a polarised, one-sided narrative on LGBTQ+ members becoming the dominant discourse, where every member of LGBTQ+ community is perceived through bullying solely.

I1: "I think bullying is the only form of LGBTQ+ discrimination we have discussed. Our teacher trainer gave solid advice how to deal with situations like this. You should talk about things as they are and always call out the bullying. So far, I haven't been in a situation where this would have happened, luckily I guess."

I2's answer also highlights that bullying seems to be one of the most persistent and common ways of dealing LGBTQ+ themes, underlining the risk of one-sidedness again. However, I2's answer also offers insight that whereas it seems one-sided, the little support that is given is received with high praise. This indicates there is still potential to discuss LGBTQ+ themes in a more over-arching manner, where the whole picture of LGBTQ+ discrimination is taken into consideration.

These responses prove that subject teacher training at University of Oulu does assess LGBTQ+ discrimination but it mainly concentrates in bullying. Bullying is perhaps the most common and widely researched forms of discrimination in school context (see Lehtonen 2003). The usage of "gay" as a slur is highly intertwined within the heteronormative thinking, where feminine acting men get labelled as gay and thus, weaker (Lehtonen 2003, pp. 143-147). However, if bullying – foremost the usage of "gay" as a slur – is the only way teacher education at University of Oulu deals with LGBTQ+ discrimination, the risk of one-

sided view where discrimination is occasional bullying in schools becomes the only assessed form of discrimination towards LGBTQ+ people. Whereas it is highly important, it is not enough to make gender and sexual minorities properly visible in school context.

As a summary, teacher students were well aware of the abbreviation LGBTQ+. Most of them were acquainted to the term through social media, news outlets or they had a real-life connection to it as a member of the community or having a friend who belongs to the LGBTQ+ community. Data indicates that occasionally LGBTQ+ themes manifest in teacher education but mostly due to the active take of students and not the training programme itself. Almost all teacher students defined gender and sexuality to be two different things. What was against the theory was the prevalence of biology as the main way to define the term “gender”. However, whereas biology was the most cited, many responses gave a hybrid definition, borrowing from both biology and social constructivism. Out of total 36, eight responses gave a fully social constructivist view, where gender is a social phenomenon. Whereas still a marginalised view, the view of gender as a social construct is recognised by a third of the recipients, indicating that some teacher students are potentially equipped to discuss about LGBTQ+ themes in teacher education and schools. However, according to the data from interview, this seldom happens due to unfavourable circumstances which are upheld by the heteronormative discourse in schools where LGBTQ+ matters are treated with silent acceptance. As majority of the respondents were aware of the disadvantaged position of LGBTQ+ members, this is mainly discussed in terms of bullying in teacher education, risking a very one-sided view on the struggles LGBTQ+ students potentially face in schools and later on in life. Overall, the teacher students seem to be keener on advancing gender and sexual sensitive teaching by having a positive attitude towards it but so far it has not manifested in teacher education or training.

4.2 Lack of support by teacher education at University of Oulu

As the results from section 4.1 show, there is potential of LGBTQ+ themes being integrated to subject teacher training at University of Oulu, albeit it strongly relies on the activity of open-minded teacher students themselves, who represent a margin. In this section I will present the results on how teacher students at University of Oulu describe the support they have received from subject teacher training in terms of dealing with LGBTQ+ themes in their training. In the qualitative survey, questions five, six, seven and

eight were designed to provide data for this matter. Since question five and eight are multiple-choice questions, naturally they were not analysed through to similar theoretical frame with pre-determined meaningful units as questions two to four in the previous section. However, questions six and seven went through same systematic analysis with their own themes and meaningful units (see Figure in previous section) that will be presented as the data is analysed. Once again, I provide data from my two interviews to gain further insight to the analysed phenomenon.

In question five (see appendices A) the respondents were asked to choose the most fitting alternative. According to 16 respondents, around 44 percent, they have encountered LGBTQ+ themes during their subject teacher education. However, ten of these respondents would like to have more LGBTQ+ themes incorporated to their training. 15 respondents chose alternatives which state LGBTQ+ themes have not been discussed or included to teacher education at University of Oulu, two of these respondents choosing the alternative where they wish LGBTQ+ themes would not be discussed. A total of 23 recipients, a majority, wished that LGBTQ+ themes were discussed more during their training, indicating that the current state of LGBTQ+ themes in subject teacher training is not enough.

In question six the respondents were asked to provide examples from their training where LGBTQ+ matters were discussed directly or indirectly and whether they would change the teacher training programme at University of Oulu in regards of LGBTQ+ themes. As results from section 4.1 show, LGBTQ+ themes are present in subject teacher training, yet in a very marginalised position and dependant on the teacher students active persuasion. In Suortamo et al. (2010) it has become evident that despite the launching of *TAUSKO* gender sensitive teaching, and by extension LGBTQ+ themes, has not gained significant ground in Finnish teacher education, staying in the margins. Therefore, as a theoretical frame for question six I chose manifestation of LGBTQ+ themes in subject teacher education and thus *manifestation* and *absent* as meaningful units for analysis. As gender, sexuality, and LGBTQ+ themes are present yet marginalised in Finnish teacher training, I theorise that most responses to be under the category of *manifestation* but are either presented as a subsidiary theme to, i.e., bullying or is the result of teacher students active persuasion.

In 21 of the 36 responses, *manifestation* revealed itself as the meaningful unit. Almost 60 percent of the recipients state that LGBTQ+ themes appeared at some point during their

subject teacher training at University of Oulu in 2020-2021. All the 21 respondents also expressed their desire to be further educated in this matter and would change the current curricula of subject teacher training in Oulu to be more inclusive. In four of these responses, the respondents said that LGBTQ+ themes were briefly discussed in one lecture: "There was a lecture, where a small amount of time was used to assess gender and sexual minorities, but I would have liked more discussion", "If I recall right, there was one lecture where we discussed of these themes. I would definitely like to have more." and "I think there was only one lecture where we directly talked about this but surely there could me more, but I wouldn't take the additional time for this from teacher training". In two of the responses, the uncertainty underlines that LGBTQ+ themes were not in a prominent role during the lecture. In nine of the 21 responses, LGBTQ+ themes were discussed as a part of more prominent themes, such as bullying in six responses, gender equality among boys and girls with two responses and one response, where LGBTQ+ themes were briefly mentioned when discussing about ethnic minorities. This indicates that LGBTQ+ themes are discussed but they often get a less important role under another theme. In eight of the remaining 21 responses, LGBTQ+ themes were directly discussed but these were all influenced by the teacher students active persuasion to include LGBTQ+ themes into the discussion: "We had a group meeting with two of our teacher trainers about 'how nowadays you can't call students 'boys' or 'girls' anymore where I openly discussed about my transgender status to make others realise it is really not about just calling people 'boy' or 'girls' but rather about identity", "I wrote my essay in educational sociology about identities in school context, otherwise I think I wouldn't have come across LGBTQ+ themes during training" and "I had to bring this up myself as a member of the LGBTQ+ community as I was afraid how to balance work and personal life in the future. I was then directed to a teacher trainer who also belongs to LGBTQ+ and all I got from that meeting was to really keep quiet of my sexuality at work." The rest 15 respondents that were categorised under *absent* had rather negative responses to the question, as nine could not remember LGBTQ+ themes being discussed during teacher training at all, and in addition the rest wished that themes like that would be left out of teacher training due to identity politics being highly personal and do not belong to school.

Therefore, majority of the respondents recognised LGBTQ+ themes to be a part of subject teacher training but as expected the occurrences mostly happened on terms of other, more emphasised themes like bullying, pushing LGBTQ+ themes to a mere sidenote. It is evident that teacher students' own willingness is one of the major forces pushing inclusion

of LGBTQ+ themes into teacher education but without an active grip from the university of Oulu it cannot have its breakthrough as *TASUKO* results show in Suortamo et al. (2010). *TASUKO* seems to be a completely forgotten concept in subject teacher training, as at any point none of the respondents referenced to it and when asked in the interviews, neither I1 nor I2 said they were familiar with the attempt of stabilising gender sensitive teaching into teacher education in Finland.

I1 and I2 were asked how the teacher education at Oulu and possibly future schools benefit from including LGBTQ+ themed lectures into the curriculum:

“Would the inclusion of LGBTQ+ themes in the subject teacher education curricula benefit anyone?”

I1: “I think it would definitely help people to see gender and sexuality are more than just aspect people get bullied for. Also, I feel like the current discourse is very sexualised, which I think is harmful. And personally, I would feel more comfortable in my future job if I encounter a LGBTQ+ student and I had concrete tools to deal with it.”

Once again, I1 brings up the notion of bullying, which seems to be perceived as the encompassing of LGBTQ+ themes in subject teacher training. In their answer, I1 states the discourse of gender and sexual minorities to be sexualised, which signifies the hierarchy of sexualities where abnormal sexualities are seen as lesser than the normalised heterosexuality (*Butler, 1991*). I1’s answer also highlights the apparent need from teacher students so be educated more.

I2: “You know, I think it would normalise things. Now I really feel like since LGBTQ+ themes are never discussed, to most in teacher training it’s just a big ‘monster’ that is sexualised, and nobody really wants to address. And that doesn’t really serve anyone.”

Much like I1, I2’s answer also emphasises the precedence of heterosexuality as the norm, as discourse about LGBTQ+ community members is overly sexualised. I2 labels talking about LGBTQ+ themes as “a monster”, once again indicating the uncomfortableness of bringing such themes up in fear of retaliation or ridicule.

According I1 and I2 by expanding the curricula of subject teacher training, the normalisation of different genders and sexualities would help to dismantle the hypersexualised image of LGBTQ+ community members. But as the data from question

six indicates, proper discussion seldom happens in subject teacher training, as research in Lehtonen (2011) had examined. It begins to look like the efforts of *TASUKO* have had a minimal impact on teacher education as a whole as the programme does not give any support to teacher students in dealing with LGBTQ+ themes or students.

To address the lack of support by the training programme to teacher students in dealing with LGBTQ+ students, in question seven the respondents were asked to provide examples from their teacher training where they have received any form support or education in dealing with a student belonging to LGBTQ+ community. As research in Lehtonen (2011) and Suortamo et al. (2010) and the report by Norema et al. (2010) indicates, chances for this are minimal. Therefore, as a theoretical frame I chose the occurrence of received support and *has received* and *has not received* as meaningful units for the purpose of analysis. Unsurprisingly, in 33 responses the meaningful unit *has not received* came true, two responses stating that the support was minimal, and one response did not indicate either. In those 33 responses, an occurring theme was that none of the respondents had not received support, stating such as “We really haven’t spoken about it”, “There wasn’t any” and “I have not received any support in this regard”. Most respondents stated that as they haven’t encountered students belonging to LGBTQ+ community, they have not had the need for support yet. However, at the same time a majority of them stated that should a need for support suddenly appear, they were not sure where to seek help from.

In the interview, I asked I1 and I2 who would they seek if they needed support or help in dealing with LGBTQ+ students during teacher training:

Interviewer: “It seems the subject teacher training doesn’t actively give support in dealing with LGBTQ+ themes. Who would you ask help from or turn to if needed?”

I1: “My first resource would be myself as a community member I feel like I could be able to deal with it. The pedagogical side scares me and I’m not sure how the trainers would take react to a question like ‘how do I deal with this trans kid?’”

I2: “I think I’d rely on myself as I personally think I have a good grasp on these things since I’d label myself as an LGBTQ+ rights advocate. I’m not sure who to turn to during training, probably my teacher trainer.”

As both I1 and I2 belong to the LGBTQ+ community, they already possess higher knowledge in these themes and are likely to have skills and ways of acquiring more

knowledge on LGBTQ+ matters. What is common in both answers is the uncertainty on who to turn to in their teacher training if necessary. This highlights again the lack of discussion and support on LGBTQ+ themes, which then creates this sphere of uncomfortableness.

As a clarification, I1 explained “the pedagogical” side as how they would deal with LGBTQ+ students from a teacher’s perspective. As Lehtonen (2012b;2014) stated, the lack of training in LGBTQ+ matters negate future teachers in reaching their full potential where they could act as norm breakers towards heteronormativity and potentially helping LGBTQ+ students as fellow LGBTQ+ members. As there seldom seems to be anyone in teacher training to turn to in questions regarding LGBTQ+ students or themes, the teacher students are ushered into work life without proper pedagogical skills to deal with gender and sexual minorities. As a member of LGBTQ+ community, I2 gave almost the same response as I1, further emphasising the need for pedagogical guidance from the training programme at University of Oulu.

To summarise what has been analysed in this section, less than half of the respondents have encountered LGBTQ+ themes during their subject teacher training. However, this mostly occurred in occasions where LGBTQ+ themes and students were presented as a part of a bigger complex, such as bullying or gendering students to “boys” or girls”. Whereas 66 percent of the respondents felt important to incorporate LGBTQ+ themes to their own teaching, majority of the teacher students described the support and guidance received from the training programme to be non-existent while there seems to be an evident need for it. If LGBTQ+ matters directly manifested during subject teacher training, it was mostly due to the activeness of the teacher students bringing forth the subject with a few cases of LGBTQ+ themes and students being discussed as an official part of the subject teacher training programme at University of Oulu. It seems the grip of heteronormativity is invisible yet present in subject teacher training as encountering LGBTQ+ students is rare, which seems to justify the miniscule treatment of LGBTQ+ themes in subject teacher training at University of Oulu. Although bodies and spaces are often an overlooked and forgotten in school context, sexualities and genders are indivisibly present in schools as they are negotiated, constructed, and realised in classrooms and school yards by students and teachers alike (*Lehtonen, 2003, p. 39*). This means that even though something does not necessarily actively manifest somewhere does not mean they are not actively present. Since teacher education (in *Suortamo et al, 2010*) and Finnish teachers (*Lehtonen, 2012b*) treat LGBTQ+ content marginalised, it is

likely not to encourage LGBTQ+ community members in schools and non-LGBTQ+ students or teachers to actively promote such matters. Thus, the silent heteronormativity in Finnish teacher education and schools is unlikely to change.

4.3 Recognising heteronormative practices in education and teacher training

In the last section of the analysis, I present the data for questions nine and ten that aimed to chart will the participants recognise heteronormative patterns in education and teacher training. In question nine the participants were asked to describe possible occurrences of LGBTQ+ themes in teaching and their reactions to it. In question ten the teacher students were asked would they be willing to incorporate LGBTQ+ themes to their teaching and how would they do it. Both questions were analysed as in previous sections, where the predetermined theory and meaningful units for analysis are presented. To gain further insight to the theme that is being assessed, I will present the data from interviews as was done in previous sections.

As data and analysis from previous sections indicate, teacher students are well aware of LGBTQ+ members disadvantaged stance in schools, LGBTQ+ themes occasionally manifest in teaching and teacher training and a majority of respondents have expressed their willingness and need to educate more in gender and sexual sensitive teaching. Therefore, the theoretical frame for question nine was the respondents ability to give examples how of LGBTQ+ themes might manifest in or during teaching. As predetermined meaningful units, I chose *non-heteronormative response* and *heteronormative response* to indicate the respondents ability or willingness to deal with LGBTQ+ themes in their teaching. I theorise that if the respondent provides an accurate enough example, they are also able to see the heteronormative patterns in schools.

After analysis, 35 responses out of 36 revealed that teacher students were able to give examples of gender and sexual minority themes occurring during teaching. Only one response was categorised under *heteronormative*, stating “Mathematics has nothing to do with gender or sexuality. Most common answers that were categorised under *non-heteronormative* dealt with the problematic tendency of schools dividing students to “boys” and “girls”, bullying and personal pronouns. In seven of the responses, the division of students to boys and girl was seen as an outdated relic that has no place in modern schools that consider the diversity of gender: “boys vs. girls juxtaposition should be avoided as you never know how some students identify”, “I personally don’t like using the

words “boys” and “girls” when talking to or correcting loud students as it might be highly offensive to some”. Teacher students that major in Finnish languages and literature (four responses) stated that literature offers multiple ways to deal with minority issues “Sexuality and gender might come up in books through the characters or when talking about the author. From this it’s easy to shed light on minorities and bring it into classroom discussion naturally”. Teacher students of foreign languages (eight responses) stated that perhaps the easiest and likeliest way of LGBTQ+ themes manifest in their teaching is through personal pronouns “As a foreign language teacher, I’d see the teaching of personal pronouns the likeliest occurrence. It would also serve as a good way to start a discussion about LGBTQ+ rights”. A teacher student of history stated that through civil rights movement, and the associated history, would be one theoretical occurrence of LGBTQ+ themes manifesting in teaching. In all of these responses, the teacher students show their ability to recognise heteronormative patterns in teaching. As they were also asked about their reaction to this, all respondents stated that their reaction would be rather neutral but supportive. Another way reacting was neutrality and silencing the situation; in six of *non-heteronormative* responses bullying was seen as the strongest chance of LGBTQ+ themes manifesting during teaching. However, in three of these six responses, the teacher student said that should bullying, i.e., calling someone “gay”, happen, the best way would be to treat it with neutrality and move on as soon as possible. In the remaining nine responses the responsibility of LGBTQ+ themes in education and teaching were thrust upon sexual health and biology, as these subjects already deal with human evolution and growth. These responses had a common view in incorporating gender and sexual minorities as a natural continuum to the biological growth of humans.

As question ten was very similar to question nine, the analysis proceeded with same theoretical frame and meaningful units. Whereas in question nine, the respondents were asked to provide general examples, in question ten the respondents were asked to provide how they would deal with LGBTQ+ themes specifically in their own teaching. The results were almost identical: regarding question ten, the meaningful unit *non-heteronormative* slightly decreased to 32 whereas in question nine it was the meaningful unit in 35 responses. The same responses were repeated in question ten, as Finnish language and literature students stated how book characters and authors can be springing points for LGBTQ+ themes, foreign language students with personal pronouns, biology students with human evolution and so forth. The decrease of *non-heteronormative* responses was among students of mathematics, who like in question nine, stated that

they did not see themselves teaching anything related to LGBTQ+ and therefore, would likely not deal with LGBTQ+ themes at all as mathematics has nothing to do with gender identities of sexual minorities.

The analysis indicates that the teacher students participating to this study clearly are able to see, analyse and, if needed, counter heteronormative practices by proposing valid actions in bringing LGBTQ+ themes naturally to schools. Whereas some teacher students whose backgrounds are in natural sciences, the interest to discuss or educate children in LGBTQ+ matters are slightly less than their peers whose background lies in humanities. Almost all respondents highly opposed bullying and theorised that instance where LGBTQ+ members are bullied are perhaps the likeliest occurrence where LGBTQ+ themes will and must be discussed.

As a final question in the interview, I asked how the interviewees would perceive the heteronormativity in subject teacher training:

“As a final question: do you personally think the subject teacher training programme is heteronormative?”

I1: “Yes and no. I mean we have all the rights to speak about assumed gender roles, problems with bullying and sexual minorities. I just don’t think much emphasis is paid to it unless it somehow rises its head, like a student asking ‘what’s trans’ and so on. I could see room for some improvement in this regard. I mean I remember that one lecture where we assessed these but more group discussion with peers and teacher trainers could help breaking the silent treatment of these things.”

I2: “I don’t think we pay too much attention to it. I mean it’s definitely there; I see that and try to question it whenever I can, but I think the general rule of thumb here is neutrality towards it. Discuss if you need to, don’t say anything if there is no need for that. So yes, I think it’s silently heteronormative, unfortunately.”

Both I1 and I2 confirm what has been theorised and analysed through the data: the subject teacher training retains heteronormative practices by giving LGBTQ+ themes mostly the silent treatment. As teacher students themselves clearly are able to analyse and discuss heteronormative practices in teaching, the rather miniscule support from the training programme combined with the marginalised education efforts in this field, the risk of another generation of teachers being ushered to schools without substantial knowledge on LGBTQ+ themes, such as transgenderism or sexual minorities. As

Lehtonen's (2012a) analysis reveals, the teachers that already are working carry a significant amount of lack in interest of discussing LGBTQ+ matters in schools due to their obscure nature that is highly likely to stem from the lack of education they have received.

4.4 Summary on findings

The analysed data revealed the teacher students' open-mindedness and tolerance towards minorities, including LGBTQ+, to be high, as could be theorised from previous research (Niemenmaa & Niemenmaa, 2006; Palojarvi, 2010). Contrasted to the survey in *Opettaja-lehti* (2010) magazine and Lehtonen's (2012a) analysis of it, teacher students are more willing to discuss and incorporate LGBTQ+ themes to their teaching than teachers that are now working at Finnish schools. Most teacher students that took part in this study recognise the poorer status of LGBTQ+ individuals, many have a strong tie to the LGBTQ+ community in various ways, such as being a part of the community themselves, knowing someone or having a close friend who is part of the LGBTQ+ community. A majority of 66 percent of the respondent in this survey felt it important to deal with LGBTQ+ themes in their teaching and almost all respondents were able to see, analyse and incorporate LGBTQ+ themes into their lectures and teaching by providing valuable examples of this. For many, the strongest example was bullying or including LGBTQ+ themes as a natural part of biology and health studies. Noteworthy are also the examples in literature and language studies, where dealing with, i.e., pronouns and minority literature served as a natural way of adding LGBTQ+ themes into teaching and classroom discussion. All in all, teacher students in this survey showed great potential in shattering the veil of silence that uphold heteronormativity in teacher training and schools.

However, as research on *TASUKO* programme shows (Suortamo et al, 2010; Lehtonen 2011), gender sensitive teaching and inclusion of gender and sexual minorities has not been successfully incorporated to teacher education in Finland. The lack of time, resources and passivity are seen as the main obstacles in the way of gender and sexual minority inclusive teaching (Lehtonen, 2014). This study indicates similar problems at University of Oulu: whereas the teacher students would be willing to be further educated and many cases, took the active role of implementing LGBTQ+ themes as part of subject teacher training, the training programme itself seems to be heteronormative still. Whereas the shift from traditional "boys versus girls" dichotomy towards a more

recognising attitude towards gender and sexual minorities is visible in the data, the subject teacher training programme at University of Oulu tends to deal with LGBTQ+ themes through marginalisation. This means that LGBTQ+ themes and students are rather seen as a seldom occurring instance that usually manifests through bullying. As there are signs that some courses and lectures have been held that directly deal with LGBTQ+ themes, the amount has clearly not been enough as the data shows as even in these cases the handling of LGBTQ+ themes has been very light.

As teacher students who took part in this study see gender and sexuality in a more open and socially constructed way, this heralds better help for LGBTQ+ students in Finnish schools who have a higher suicide rate and are more likely to face bullying than their cisgender heterosexual peers (*THL, 2020; Alanko, 2014*). However, as concrete examples and education of handling LGBTQ+ themes and students during teacher training seems to be marginalised and non-existent, the participants expressed their worry towards this by stating their unsureness of how to deal with situations where LGBTQ+ themes manifest in real life. The call for more LGBTQ+ friendly education and material was clear.

All in all, to contrast this to my original theorisation, the current state of heteronormativity in subject teacher training at University of Oulu is evident, invisible yet showing signs of slowly shifting to a more inclusive teaching. More visible actions are required, as the teacher students have also expressed. Now it mostly rests on the shoulders of students when it in fact should be a joint effort to usher teacher education towards a more inclusive education as whole.

5. Conclusion

As I originally theorised in section 1, heteronormativity in Finnish teacher training made itself visible in subject teacher training at University of Oulu through the descriptions of subject teacher students. Whereas not as salient as one might have thought at first, the shift towards a more inclusive teacher training signals that from the times of *TASUKO* (Lehtonen, 2011) programme a slight improvement has happened. Therefore, it cannot be stated that the subject teacher training at University of Oulu is all around heteronormative. However, in light of the data of this study, as heteronormativity mostly remains unchallenged and unquestioned in Finnish teacher education, it should not come as a surprise that heteronormative aspects were found. As societies become more accepting, teacher students themselves play an important role in adding more gender and sexual minority themes into their teaching as they are both current and future negotiators of equality (Lehtonen in Suortamo et al. 2010). As research in this field is rather scarce, more academic pressure is also required if LGBTQ+ themes are to become a fully respected part of Finnish teacher training and education (Lehtonen, 2014). Overall, what this specific study shows is that yes, heteronormativity in teacher education is still there and a wish for a change has been asked.

When assessing the trustworthiness of this study, an obvious point of scrutiny is the slim number of participants. Another point of scrutiny is that this study only focused on one subject teacher training programme in Finland, thus there is a possibility teacher training programmes vary among one another. Therefore, nothing truly conclusive can be drawn from this study on a nation-wide level but as a directional study this master's thesis points what and one example of how to study heteronormativity in Finnish teacher education. And as the data and previous research indicates, there is a need for that.

As this is a qualitative study, Bengtsson (2016, p. 7) suggests examining four factors: (1) credibility, (2) dependability, (3) transferability and (4) confirmability. Credibility refers to the way the study is carried to ensure all valid data is included. Credibility is ensured by extensive supervision, revision, and acceptance of this study by the University of Oulu. Dependability refers to the changes and alterations to the researcher's decisions during analysis. To ensure this, I carefully formed a solid theory from the previous research material with predetermined factors I want to measure with my data, thus there was no need to change the way the analysis was done. Transferability refers to the replication of the study with different target groups and settings. Whereas is a qualitative study and qualitative studies tend to focus on small subjects with in-depth, I argue that if a similar

study would be conducted in a different Finnish university of with a larger participant number in Oulu, the overall results would be similar to the results of this study.

Lastly, confirmability refers to the objectivity and neutrality of the data. This is perhaps the only factor that is compromised to a certain degree, as this study deals with sexual and gender minority themes and most participants expressed a strong tie to these themes it might have influenced the data. However, as the sole purpose of this study is to examine whether participants perceive inequality relating to the treatment of LGBTQ+ themes in subject teacher training at University of Oulu, the usage of such data is justified. It also underlines the importance of inner circle interviews (Hyvärinen et al, 2017), where members of the circle are able to give more adequate responses of the examined phenomenon. All in all, by proving these four steps in this thesis, it can be deemed reliable. For future studies, I suggest the broadening of the number of participants to former subject teacher students and class teacher students if heteronormativity as whole is to be examined in teacher education at University of Oulu. To examine heteronormativity in Finnish teacher education as a whole, more similar studies should be carried out in different universities and higher education institutions that provide teacher training in Finland. By doing this, the elimination of heteronormativity and thus, more inclusive teacher education could be provided to tackle the need for LGBTQ+ professionals in the field of education in Finland.

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Seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistöjen kohtaaminen aineenopettajan koulutuksessa

Tämän kyselyn tarkoituksena on kartoittaa Oulun yliopistossa aineenopettajaksi opiskelevien kokemuksia ja näkemyksiä seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistöön kuuluvien oppilaiden kohtaamisesta sekä aineenopettajan koulutuksesta. Vastaajista ei pidetä henkilörekisteriä, vastaukset ovat täysin anonyymejä eikä vastauksia voida jäljittää yksilöidysti. Vastauksia käytetään pro gradututkielman aineistoksi Oulun yliopiston humanistisessa tiedekunnassa suoritettavaa englannin kielen ja kirjallisuuden koulutusohjelman maisterintutkintoa varten.

Kysely koostuu kymmenestä kysymyksestä, joista kaksi on monivalintaa ja loput kahdeksan avoimia kysymyksiä. Avoimiin kysymyksiin toivotaan ytimekkäitä parin tai kolmen virkkeen mittaisia vastauksia. Koko kyselyyn vastaaminen vie arviolta 15 minuuttia. Voit tarkistaa ja tarvittaessa muokata vastauksiasi ennen lähettämistä yhteenvetosivulla. Yhteenvetosivulla paina "sulje" painiketta lähettääksesi vastauksesi.

Tämän lisäksi kyselytutkimukseen vastanneista etsitään halukkaita haastatteluihin (2-3kpl), jotka suoritetaan erikseen sovittuina ajankohtina vallitsevat turvallisuusohjeet huomioiden joko lähi- tai etätapaamisina. Mikäli olet kiinnostunut haastattelusta, jätä yhteystietosi kyselyn viimeisessä osiossa. Haastateltaville luvassa palkkio! Myöskään haastatelluista ei pidetä henkilörekisteriä, vastaukset ovat täysin anonyymejä eikä kenenkään vastauksia voida jäljittää yksilöidysti. Sekä kyselyn että haastatteluiden vastaukset säilytetään turvallisesti

erillisellä
tietokoneella sekä muistitikulla.

Kyselyyn vastanneiden kesken arvotaan 1 (YKSI) K-ryhmän lahjakortti.
Ohjeet osallistumiseen kyselyn viimeisessä osiossa.

Lisätietoja sähköpostitse: niko.karttunen@gmail.com

1. Kerro opetettavat aineesi. Voit halutessasi myös kertoa sukupuolesi:

2. Lyhennelmä LGBTQAPIA (tai lyhyemmin LGBT+, katso alla oleva kuva) kattaa monia sukupuoli- sekä seksuaalivähemmistöjä. Kuvaile tilannetta/tilanteita, joissa olet ollut tekemisissä termin kanssa.

L	G	B	T	T	Q	Q	I	A	A	P
Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Trans- gender	Transexual	Queer	Question- ing	Intersex	Ally	Asexual	Pansexual
A woman who is primarily attracted to women.	A man who is primarily attracted to men; sometimes a broad term for individuals primarily attracted to the same sex.	An individual attracted to people of their own and opposite gender.	A person whose gender identity differs from their assigned sex at birth.	An out-dated term that originated in the medical and psychological communities for people who have permanently changed their gender identity through surgery and hormones.	An umbrella term to be more inclusive of the many identities and variations that make up the LGBTQ+ community.	The process of exploring and discovering one's own sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.	An individual whose sexual anatomy or chromosomes do not fit with the traditional markers of "female" and "male."	Typically a non-queer person who supports and advocates for the queer community; an individual within the LGBTQ+ community can be an ally for another member that identifies differently than them.	An individual who generally does not feel sexual desire or attraction to any group of people. It is not the same as celibacy and has many sub-groups.	A person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical and/or spiritual attraction to members of all gender identities/expressions, not just people who fit into the standard gender binary.

3. Miten tulkitsisit termit sukupuoli ja seksuaalisuus? Miten termit omasta mielestäsi eroavat toisistaan?

4. Viime aikoina LGBT+ yhteisö on saanut paljon näkyvyyttä niin mediassa kuin arkielämässä. Miten koet oman tietoisuutesi lisääntyneen liittyen LGBT+ teemaisiin asioihin tai LGBT+ yhteisön kohtaamiin haasteisiin viimeisen parin vuoden aikana?

5. Koetko aineenopettajan koulutuksen käsitelleen seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistöihin liittyviä teemoja tai aiheita?

- ☐ Teemoja ja aiheita on käsitelty. Koen käsittelyn olleen riittävää.
- ☐ Teemoja ja aiheita on käsitelty. Toivoisin aiheita käsiteltävän lisää.
- ☐ En osaa sanoa.
- ☐ Teemoja ja aiheita ei ole käsitelty. Toivoisin aiheita käsiteltävän lisää.
- ☐ Teemoja ja aiheita ei ole käsitelty. En toivo aiheita käsiteltävän lisää.

6. Kerro omakohtaisia kokemuksiasi tilanteista aineenopettajan koulutuksessa, joissa käsiteltiin LGBT+ aiheisia asioita tai teemoja suorasti tai

epäsuorasti. Muuttaisitko aineenopettajan nykyistä koulutusrakennetta aiheeseen liittyen?

7. Kuvaile aineenopettajan koulutuksessa saamaasi tukea ja opastusta liittyen seksuaali- ja/tai sukupuolivähemmistöön kuuluvan oppilaan kohtaamisessa.

8. Koetko LGBT+ aiheisten asioiden ja teemojen käsittelyn tarpeelliseksi opetuksessasi?

- ☐ Kyllä, koen käsittelyn tarpeelliseksi.
- ☐ En osaa sanoa.
- ☐ Ei, asian käsittely ei ole tarpeellista.

9. Miten erilaiset sukupuoli- ja/tai seksuaali-identiteetit ovat tai voisivat konkreettisesti tulla esiin opetustilanteissa? Miten olet reagoinut tai reagoisit kyseisissä tilanteissa?

10. Miten käsittelisit LGBT+ aiheisia teemoja omassa opetustyössäsi, vai

tulisiko niitä käsitellä ollenkaan? Miksi tai miksi ei?

- ☐ 11. Jos haluat osallistua VAIN arvontaan, valitse vaihtoehto 1. Valitse vaihtoehto
- ☐ 2, jos haluat osallistua haastatteluun. Mikäli et halua osallistua kumpaankaan, valitse vaihtoehto 3.
- ☐

Osallistun vain arvontaan.

Osallistun haastatteluun.

En osallistu kumpaankaan.

12. Sähköposti

Osoitettasi käytetään
vain yhteydenottoon!
Osoitteen antaminen ei
ole pakollista.

Jatkaaksesi yhteenvetosivulle ja lähettääksesi vastauksesi, klikkaa alla olevaa ruutua ja paina "LÄHETÄ". Voit tarvittaessa muokata vastauksiasi yhteenvetosivulla. Huomioithan, että vastauksiasi EI lähetetä ennen kuin olet käynyt yhteenvetosivulla ja klikannut "SULJE" painiketta.

HUOM! Vastauksiasi EI lähetetä ennen kuin olet käynyt yhteenvetosivulla ja klikannut "SULJE" painiketta.

Voit myös palata kysymyksiin ja muokata vastauksiasi yhteenvetosivulla ennen vastaustesi lähettämistä.

Appendices B

Interview questions

Haastattelukysymykset

Helmikuu 2021

Teema: Vastaajan asennoituminen LGBTQ+ yhteisöä kohtaan

Kysymys 1: Tulosten mukaan sosiaalinen media oli suosituin tiedonlähde LGBTQ+ teemaisten asioiden tiimoilta. Miksi luulet sosiaalisen median korostuvan lähteenä seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistöjä koskevaa tietoisuutta kohtaan aineenopettajaopiskelijoilla, eivätkä esimerkiksi yliopisto-opinnot?

Kysymys 2: Ovatko käsityksesi termistä ”sukupuoli” muuttuneet yliopisto-opintojen aikana, erityisesti jos ajatellaan aineenopettajan koulutusta?

Teema: Aineenopettajan koulutuksesta saama tuki LGBTQ+ teemojen käsittelyssä

Kysymys 3: Tuloksista käy ilmi aineenopettajaopiskelijoiden valveutuneisuus LGBTQ+ yhteisön huonosta asemasta niin suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa kuin koulumaailmassa. Onko aineenopettajaopintojen aikana käsitelty tätä?

Kysymys 4: Kokisitko LGBTQ+ aiheisten teemojen sisällyttämisen aineenopettajaopintoihin hyödyttävän ketään?

Kysymys 5: Näyttäisi siltä, että aineenopettajakoulutus ei anna aktiivista tukea LGBTQ+ teemojen käsittelyssä. Jos tarve vaatisi, keneen kääntyisit asioiden taholta aineenopettajakoulutuksessa?

Teema: Heteronormatiivisuuden tunnistaminen aineenopettajakoulutuksessa

Kysymys 6: Koetko itse aineenopettajakoulutuksen olevan heteronormatiivinen?